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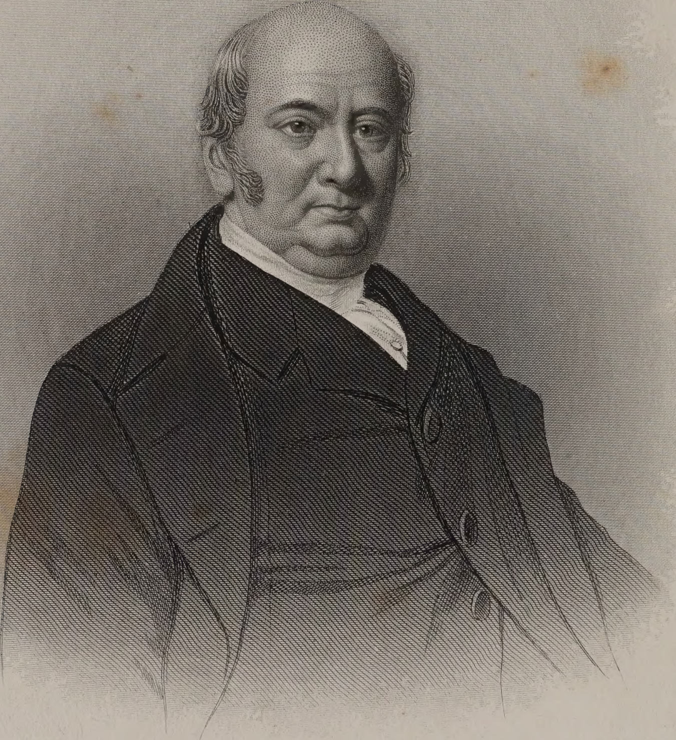

Eng^d by A. H. Ritchie.

Jabez Bunting

THE HISTORY

OF THE

Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century,

CALLED

METHODISM,

CONSIDERED IN ITS DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONAL FORMS
AND ITS RELATIONS TO BRITISH AND AMERICAN
PROTESTANTISM.

BY ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.

VOLUME III.

From the Death of Wesley to the Centenary Jubilee of Methodism.

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

PREFACE.

This volume concludes my task—"The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism, considered in its different Denominational Forms, and its Relations to British and American Protestantism." Another work, "The History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," alluded to in former prefaces, will be a complement to the present volumes, but it will have the advantage of being also a distinct and independent production in both substance and form. A parallel line of narrative, relating to American Methodism, extends through these three volumes, sufficiently for their purpose as a record of the general Methodistic movement centralizing in the Wesleyan body of England; but most of the data of American Methodism have necessarily been reserved for its separate history.

The first of the present volumes brings the narrative down to the death of Whitefield; the second to the death of Wesley; the third to the centenary jubilee of Methodism in 1839.

The first and second volumes are complete in themselves as a record of "The Life and Times of Wesley," and will be found, it is hoped, as promised in my first preface, to be "the fullest account of the 'Life and Times' of the great founder yet published." They can be obtained by the reader as a completed work, and present a conclusive view of Methodism as founded and administered by Wesley and Whitefield.

Aside from this chronological convenience a singular, if not providential, harmony marks the course of events narrated in these three volumes. It presents three well-defined yet correlative phases or stages. The first is the period of Wesley's personal ministry, the forming period of Methodism, in which it begins, extends to both hemispheres, and becomes at last an organic system; the second may be called its testing period, comprehending nearly the whole decade which followed Wesley's death, in which it was tried as with fire by internal and external controversies respecting its subsequent government, but from which it emerged with a settled polity and augmented vigor, and entered upon its third and what seems to be its final development, missionary or universal evangelization. Remaining no longer a revival of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism in both hemispheres, it became, in this last period, the most effective missionary Church of our age, planting its standards in many parts of continental Europe, in several of the British colonies of the West Indies, the continent of South America, Africa, Ceylon, continental India, China, the islands of the Southern Ocean, and indeed on the outlines of much of the earth; so that, though at the death of Wesley Methodism was considered a marvelous fact in English history, in our day the missions of British Methodism alone comprise more than double the number of traveling preachers and nearly double the number of communicants reported from the entire Wesleyan "Connection" at Wesley's last Conference. If the almost epic interest of the events of the first period somewhat subsides in the present volume, yet this grand outbreak of the movement into much of the world gives to its later periods a novel if not a sublimer interest. The great founders, the Wesleys, Whitefield, Fletcher, etc., disappear from the arena, but Coke still lingers, greater in some respects than any of them notwithstanding acknowledged weaknesses, and other and commanding actors—Bunting, Newton, Clarke, and Watson, not excepting humbler but historic men like Carvosso, Hicks, Dawson, Saville—and saintly female representatives like Mary Fletcher, Hester Ann Rogers, Lady Maxwell, Lady Mary Fitzgerald, Dinah Evans, (the heroine of "Adam Bede,") maintain, if they do not increase, the characteristic interest of the narrative.

In one respect I have submitted reluctantly, but necessarily, to much self-restraint in the preparation of the present volume. Not a few actors in its scenes still live, and some of them are among my most estimable personal friends. To give to their services the particular record and to themselves the particular characterization which have been given in the volume not only to their predecessors but to some of their contemporary but deceased fellow-laborers, would be impossible without the risk of much indelicacy toward themselves and their families, and of contradictory opinions among their ecclesiastical associates, especially in matters of controversy now happily at rest. I have ample data for a record of their denominational services, but I have chosen to hold them in reserve for a more convenient time, which, I pray, may be far off. I have studied to give a sufficient account of the plans and events in which they have shared, while refraining as much as possible from merely personal details. It has been found necessary, indeed, that my rule in this respect should be nearly absolute, and even the names of many such men will be found unmentioned. I have not deemed it desirable to encumber my pages with minute accounts of many local disputes and secessions which have occurred in the progress of Methodism. There is no modern religious denomination which does not unhappily afford a superabundance of such data. The characteristic fervor of ecclesiastical controversies usually gives them more contemporary than historical importance. I have sketched such as have had a general or permanent significance in the history of the denomination, but have ignored most others, or dispatched them with passing allusions.

The subject is fruitful of great questions which the reader may deem capable of more elaborate or more philosophical treatment than I have given them. But dissertation is not history, nor is it admissable in history except so far as it becomes itself historical by dealing in the proper data of history, that is to say, in matters of fact. I have discussed the historical standpoint of Methodism, its Calvinistic controversy, the episcopal or rather prelatical question relating to Wesley's ordinations and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church; an entire book has been devoted to the peculiar discipline of the denomination; but all these pages will be found to consist substantially of matters of fact reserved from the course of the narrative for this special use. "History is philosophy teaching by example," and the father of history was the greatest of "story tellers." Wherever a fact, an anecdote, or an incident could serve my purpose, instead of general remarks, I have sacrificed the latter. The secret (so called) of the success of Methodism has been discussed in many an essay, and even in some elaborate books, (as those of Isaac Taylor and Dr. Benjamin F. Tefft.) I do not admit the conditions of its success to be a secret; the question receives frequent attention at appropriate points in these three volumes, but no chapter is devoted to it. Why should the narrative pause for the discussion of a question which it answers on almost every page?

Important emendations of the preceding volumes have been suggested by transatlantic correspondents; every page of those two volumes has been thoroughly revised, and topographical and other mistakes, and defects of style have been corrected. The twenty-fourth edition of the first volume and the seventeenth of the second may be referred to as presenting these improvements.

The valuable assistance of literary friends has been acknowledged in the prefaces of the preceding volumes. I make the same grateful acknowledgement of the courtesy of Rev. Dr. Holdich, of the American Bible Society, and of Prof. Strong, S.T.D., in the revision of the proofs of the present volume. I am also under many obligations to Rev. John Campbell, Joseph M'Coy, Esq., and other Irish friends for important documents relating to Irish Methodism.

This volume has been stereotyped more than half a year. The disturbed state of the country has nearly suspended the book trade during that period; but recent favorable auspices, together with large demands for the work, induce the publishers to venture upon its publication.

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HISTORY OF METHODISM.

BOOK VII.

FROM THE DEATH OF WESLEY TO THE CENTENARY OF METHODISM, 1791–1839.

CHAPTER I.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY AND OF METHODISM AT THE DEATH OF WESLEY.

Death of Wesley — Condition of Methodism — Alarm of the Connection — Condition of the Country — The French Revolution — Thomas Paine — Influence of his Writings — Prevalence of corrupt and Revolutionary Sentiments.

John Wesley died in the spring of 1791. The great work of his life was now to be tested, and the question whether it had inherent vitality enough to survive the loss of his personal superintendence, was to be decided.

Wesley himself was too firm a believer in Divine Providence to be anxious for the future. He was content to improve his passing opportunities as providential suggestions, assured that God would take care of their results. This was the practical maxim of both his faith and his philosophy. And thus, as we have seen, he had, by his long and providential life, been able to provide extraordinary guarantees for his cause—an organic system for it at home, an episcopal organization for it in the New World; standards of doctrine, a liturgy, a psalmody, a considerable literature, and incipient institutions of education; conferences, circuits, bands, classes, societies, and chapels; trustees, stewards, leaders, and exhorters; missionary foundations in the British North American Provinces, the West Indies, and the Channel Islands; a well-trained itinerant ministry, five hundred and fifty strong; a local ministry of thousands of hardly less effective laborers; and more than a hundred and forty thousand church-members in both hemispheres.

The great movement had, by this time, another important advantage, the moral power of historical prestige. Its history thus far was a heroic one, and full of reminiscences which were suited to inspire it with a common spirit and a persistent energy. Its great "fights of affliction" and its great victories could not be forgotten; and the names of the two Wesleys, of Fletcher, Perronet, Grimshaw, Walsh, Nelson, and others, besides those which it claimed in common with Calvinistic Methodism—Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon, Harris, Romaine, Berridge, Venn, Newton, and their many eminent associates, had become household words among its people.

Though many mighty men had fallen in the ministerial "Itineracy," martyrs to its privations and toils, Wesley left in its ranks not a few distinguished standard bearers, to whom the people might look in the new emergency—Coke, Benson, Moore, Hopper, Mather, Taylor, Creighton, Dickenson, Brackenbury, Pawson, Bradburn, Bramwell, Olivers, Adam Clarke, Reece, Entwisle, and scores of others scarcely less prominent; and young men who were to become historical were soon to enter the field and be the leaders of its hosts—Richard Watson, Jabez Bunting, Robert Newton, and other eminent laborers of the beginning of the nineteenth century.

It is, however, a law of history, or rather of Providence, that all great public bodies—states or Churches—must, like great individual men, be disciplined by adversity, and derive thence much of their best strength. While Wesley was serenely passing through his last days, both his friends and his foes were anticipating with anxious or curious speculation the approaching crisis of Methodism. All supposed that it would be perilous, many that it would be fatal. "Pray pray, pray!" wrote his traveling companion, Joseph Bradford, from the side of his dying bed to the preachers; and the alarming word sped over the kingdom, calling the societies to their altars with supplications for the future. The pious throngs that gathered around his corpse, as he lay in state, in City Road Chapel, mourned not so much his departure to his rest, as the privation and probable peril of the Church; and when, in the early morning of the 9th of March, he was interred by torchlight, to avoid the pressure of the anxious crowd, doubtless many a hostile conjecture was uttered in the metropolis, that the hope of Methodism was buried with him. Entwisle, receiving news of his death the same week, wrote: "My soul trembles for the ark of the Lord. There are men of so many different judgments in our Connection, all of whom now claim an equal authority, especially the senior preachers, that I fear we may have divisions. O Lord, pour out the spirit of unity, peace, and mutual forbearance upon thy servants, that the wicked may not triumph."[1] And another contemporary writer says that many of the preachers attended the next conference "with such depression of spirits, as they might be expected to feel while witnessing the closing grave of the Connection."[2]

The determination of its fate could hardly have devolved upon more inauspicious times. Wesley died while the tumults of the French Revolution were startling the civilized world. During the preceding two or three years, Continental Europe had been surging with the first violent motions of that grand catastrophe. While he was dying the throne of France was falling, and in a few weeks her king was fleeing from his people, but only to be brought back to the guillotine. More than twenty millions of Frenchmen were soon plunged in tumult and terror, tens of thousands flying to arms or fleeing before them. The best political doctrines were corrupted, and abused to the worst ends; the worst moral doctrines were consecrated as a religion of vice, and honored with hecatombs of martyrs. The throne, the altar, and social order were prostrated; and for a quarter of a century the political foundations of Europe, from Scandinavia to the Calabrias, from Madrid to Moscow, were shaken as by incessant earthquakes. The American people had presented a remarkable example of self-liberation and self-government; the French Revolution followed in the wake of the American Revolution; and, as it adopted the American democratic opinions, it is not surprising that liberal Englishmen at first hailed it as a new era of liberty and progress for the human race. Such an uprising of a great people, for such principles, had never before occurred in the history of the world. Generous minds were everywhere too much interested in its sublime energy and promise, to perceive, at first, its radical and disastrous errors. All England became more or less infected with these errors; liberal and learned divines, like Price and Priestley, sympathized with the Revolution and promoted its doctrines. Both these clergymen were honored with the rights of French citizenship. Literary men generally hailed with hope the mighty uprising, especially the new poets of the age, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Burns. The gentle, pure-minded Wordsworth held in Paris, two years after the death of Wesley, relations of intimacy with the ferocious Robespierre; and Watt, the greatest benefactor that the human race has ever had in the practical arts, shared the poet's friendship with the demoniac revolutionist. Mackintosh wrote his Vindiciæ Gallicæ, and was made a French citizen; and Leigh Hunt and Montgomery suffered imprisonment under suspicion of French principles. Horne Tooke was their active partisan. Fox and Sheridan yielded to the new influence. One month before Wesley's death Fox pronounced the new French constitu tion "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country."

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[1] Memoirs of Entwisle by his son, chap. 3. Bristol, 1848.

[2] Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 12. New York, 1837.

Under such auspices, the dangerous doctrines, though generally associated with profound religious errors, could not but spread rapidly among the masses. An extraordinary man, a man of the people, direct and energetic in thought, vigorous though often coarse in style, of indomitable persistence, and not without generous purposes at first, suddenly appeared and spread the new opinions by his pen, over most of the realm. He was born a Quaker, bred a staymaker, acquired the elements of education, ran away to sea, became a privateer, an exciseman, a tobacconist, a school usher; he divorced his wife, went to America, with recommendations from Franklin, became there a "magazine" editor, an essayist, the intimate friend of Washington, Jefferson, of John and Samuel Adams, and secretary to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs. His pen determined the colonial struggle into a revolution; a hundred thousand copies of the decisive pamphlet flew over the country, and in less than half a year the united colonies declared their independence. He has been pronounced the founder of a new school of pamphleteering, the first to write politics for "the million." He was conspicuous in the revolutionary army, was appointed to the staff of one of its generals, and followed its trying fortunes with unfaltering hope, issuing, in every hour of extraordinary discouragement or danger, "crises" which were as trumpet blasts to the people. They were read by "every corporal's guard" in the army, printed on brown paper in "every town of every state," and burned by the hangman in England. They have been pronounced an appendage to the army, as necessary and formidable as its cannon. His "Crises" ended only with the proclamation of peace; Washington gratefully acknowledged his services; the States of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey voted him funds or lands, and he became one of the notable men of the New World.

This singular man, in whom common sense and audacity seemed to take the form of genius, if not of greatness, was too restless to remain content with his American fortunes. He went to France at a time when the revolutionary spirit was fermenting, and was received by the highest personages of its learned and social circles. He was a prepared champion of the new doctrines. Passing over to England, he gave them an impulse there which was deemed dangerous to the state. He was proscribed, but meanwhile the French people elected him to their National Convention. He fled from the police of London to be received at Calais by the paraded guard and a grand salute. The shouting multitude escorted him to the town hall, where he was welcomed with enthusiastic ceremonies by the municipal authorities. The towns on his route to the capital hailed him with similar enthusiasm. He became a chief among the revolutionists, but had the humanity to vote against the execution of Louis XVI. During the reign of terror his life was often periled. He was imprisoned, and expected hourly to be summoned to the guillotine; the door of his room was marked for the executioner; but the sign was made upon it while it was open, and at night, when the terrible messenger usually arrived, the mark was on the inside, and, as he himself says, "the destroying angel passed by." On his way to prison he had handed the manuscript of his most pernicious book, "The Age of Reason," to an American fellow-citizen, Joel Barlow, who gave it to the public. Saved from the guillotine, apparently by an accident, the prisoner escaped, returned to America, sunk into habits of intemperance, and died in ignominy and with remorseful agony.

Such was Thomas Paine; a man whose writings did more to corrupt the moral and political sentiments of the common people of England and America, than those of any other author of the last or present century.[3]

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[3] Life of Paine, by Sherwin. Also an able article on Paine's career in the Atlantic Monthly for November and December, 1859.

Six months before Wesley's death, Burke's celebrated "Reflections" were sent out to counteract what he saw to be the dangerous tendencies of the English mind regarding the French Revolution. So strong, however, were these tendencies, that it has been said its publication was but the sowing of the dragon's teeth, and every copy brought out a radical to reply with speech or pamphlet. Paine's "Rights of Man" was the most effective answer to it. No publication of the period, not even the letters of Junius, produced so great a sensation. England became divided into two parties, the adherents of Burke and of Paine. Paine was burned in effigy in the streets of London by his opponents; but "the friends of humanity," so called, added new lines to the national hymn in his honor.[4] The "Rights of Man" was scattered over the United Kingdom. It was printed in England and Ireland, and thirty thousand copies were given away to the lower classes at the expense of political clubs. An edition at a sixpence was issued for the poor, and distributed into the obscurest parts of the country. A hundred thousand were sold, besides the many thousands gratuitously distributed. The revolutionary clubs became, meanwhile, formidable combinations of the violent elements of the metropolis. Dr. Price preached before them. Horne Tooke made speeches at their festivals, giving as his toast, "The revolution of the world!" Paine was their honored guest. Three of them were vortices of agitation in London. One of them, "The Corresponding Society," copying the example of the Paris Jacobins, organized auxiliaries throughout England; they maintained a correspondence with the Paris society and sent commissioners and contributions to it. England was, in fine, pervaded by the new ideas, Ireland was in a state of rebellion. and the United Kingdom seemed fast drifting toward a disastrous crisis.

[4] "God save great Thomas Paine,
His Rights of Man proclaim
From pole to pole."

The theological ideas of Paine and the continental revolutionists could not, of course, be readily dissociated from their political opinions, and infidelity exasperated the general infection. So popular was the sway of Paine's deistical writings, that the friends of religion, from the prelate down to the ephemeral pamphleteer, deemed it necessary to refute and counteract them, by successive efforts, for many years.[5] It became one of the most difficult tasks of the Methodist ministry to uproot this popular infidelity on both sides of the Atlantic. It prevailed extensively in the United States, and spread over the great valley of the Mississippi, till it was swept away by an unparalleled "revival" of religion, which, though attended by many excesses and "physical phenomena," left a profound and enduring impression on the moral life of whole states in that great domain.[6]

It was in these perilous times that Methodism was to be tested by the loss of its founder, and the experiment of a new administration of its system. Had the French Revolution broken out a half century earlier, there can hardly be a doubt that its corrupt political and moral ideas would have proved extremely dangerous, if not fatal, to England. The imbruted masses, such as they have been described, by citations from British writers, in the preceding volumes, were fitted to be the victims of demagogues and the instruments of rebellion. But, fortunately for the country, the mobs that opposed Methodism for successive years had been conquered and reclaimed by it, and the impartial historian may not deem it extravagant to assert that the great evangelical movement, which, within and without the Establishment, had, for two generations, been rescuing the neglected populace, saved England in this greatest emergency of the political world. She barely escaped; what then would have been her fate in the absence of this mighty restraint?

[5] Bishop Watson's "Apology" is their best refutation. Samuel Drew, the Methodist author, published an answer to Paine as early as 1799.

[6] For some remarks on this "great revival," see vol. i, book 6, chap. i, of this work. Also Milburn's Rifle, Ax, and Saddle-bags, and Hodge's History of the Presbyterian Church, etc.

Methodism, considered in its general character, as Arminian, Calvinistic, and Low Church, had revolutionized in many respects the condition of the common people. It had introduced, almost universally, as we have seen, the Sunday school, and had excited a general thirst for knowledge. Authorship had been turned from the patronage of the great few to the popular market. Circulating libraries and reading clubs had been generally established. Wesley had led the way in cheap publications, and tracts and small volumes were scattered everywhere. The printing press, before almost confined to the metropolis, had been set up in the provincial towns. From 1753 to the next year after Wesley's death, the newspapers of the kingdom had more than doubled their circulation; and in thirty years after the recognized epoch of Wesleyan Methodism, popular assemblies were held, for the first time among Englishmen, for the discussion of their political rights and duties.[7] Some of these improvements would only have facilitated the radical tendency of the present period, had it not been for the moral influence which at once produced and controlled them.

In the fermentation of opinions which now prevailed, the Methodist masses themselves shared to no small extent; not, indeed, in the rife theological errors, not, perhaps, to any serious degree, in the worst novelties of the new political doctrines, but in the general and perilous spirit of the times. Adam Clarke intimates that there were examples of the infection among the itinerants of Methodism; that its most eloquent preacher, Bradburn, taught "the lowest republicanism" as early as the year of Wesley's death;[8] while his other colleague, Benson, believed it his duty to the times to contend in the same pulpits for the extreme opposite opinions.[9] Such discussions were not uncommon in the pulpits of the day among all religious denominations; and the most energetic actor in the strife which ensued among the Methodists, the leader of their first permanent secession, was an ecclesiastical representative of the revolutionary sentiments.[10]

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[7] Cook's History of Party, III, 87. See vol. ii, book vi; chap. 5, of the present work, for proofs of the popular progress during this period.

[8] Etheridge's Adam Clarke, I, 9. Etheridge dissents from Clarke's statement; the latter was certainly most competent to judge of the fact.

[9] "But," replies Benson's biographer, "Mr. Benson was aware of the strenuous efforts then in progress to propagate Paine's politics with

Such is a general view of the condition of the country and of the Wesleyan body at this critical period. What was to be the result to Methodism? We are prepared by this review of the times to see it shaken to its foundations by internal and external convulsions; but if it has the providential mission thus far claimed for it, these adversities can only fortify it. The main question is, whether its leading men, accustomed to be guided rather than to be guides, shall have skill enough to conduct it cautiously, yet liberally, through its new difficulties; prudence enough to concede sufficiently, wisdom enough not to concede too hastily or too much. The French Revolution, with all its disasters, gave to civilization some of our greatest advantages; but its greatest blessing is the lesson it afforded respecting the right spirit of public reforms. It refuted the fallacy that revolutions never go backward. History had refuted that licentious maxim in some of the most memorable struggles

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Paine's infidelity; and, like a faithful watchman, he warned his unsuspecting hearers of their danger." (Treffry's Life of Benson, chap. 6.) Adam Clarke says: "On the merits of the French Revolution, in all the states through which it passed, the British nation was itself greatly divided. Even religious people caught the general mania, greatly accelerated by the publications of Thomas Paine, particularly his Rights of Man, insomuch that the pulpits of all parties resounded with the *pro* and *con* politics of the day, to the utter neglect of the pastoral duty, so that 'the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.'"

[10] Kilham relates with evident, if not gleeful satisfaction, the confusion of one of his brethren, who, against the remonstrances of the ardent "reformer," preached in favor of the "present administration" of the country. "On the national fast-day, I heard him and prayed earnestly that his mouth might be stopped. Whether my prayers were answered or not I will not say, but I had the happiness to find him fairly set fast in the midst of his oratorical declamations; it plainly appeared he could not get on at all as he intended, and I was pleased to see him completely mortified." Kilham's Life, p. 66.

of humanity; but the French Revolution taught the still needed admonition with an emphasis which can never be forgotten. Most of the later political outbreaks of Europe have shown the effect of the lesson. England has rendered secure her constitution and her progress by faithfully remembering it. She has substituted reformation for revolution. The fate of Methodism depended now on the same policy.

CHAPTER II.

CONFERENCES AND CONTROVERSIES, FROM THE DEATH OF WESLEY TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE WESLEYAN POLITY, 1791-1797.

Dr. Coke — William Thompson — The Halifax Circular — Administrative Arrangements — Popular Agitation — The Sacramental Question — Alexander Kilham — His Character and Labors — Conference of 1791 — Its Provisions for the new Exigency — Methodism in America — Resumption of the Controversy — Conference of 1792 — An Extraordinary Expedient — Continuance of the Controversy — Conference of 1793 — Episcopacy proposed — Conference of 1794 — Dispute at Bristol — Conference of 1795 — Plan of Pacification — Conference of 1796 — Benson preaching on the State of the Connection — Trial and Expulsion of Kilham — Perilous Agitations — Convention of Trustees — Conference of 1797 — Conclusion of the Controversy.

It would be neither interesting nor relevant to record the details of the internal strifes of Methodism which followed the death of Wesley. To refer to them as fully as may be necessary for a just account of this period of trial will be a sufficient demand on the patience of the reader. The subject is not, however, without a peculiar interest, if not in its facts, yet in the great hazards which they involved. It was an age of pamphlets; printed "appeals" and "circulars" on the questions in controversy flew over the United Kingdom like the leaves of autumn through the ensuing seven years. Public assemblies, "district meetings," and delegated conventions were held, and were often inflamed with excitement. Good men mourned at the perilous prospect of the great cause, and its enemies congratulated one another on its probable failure. While its guides were exhorting or remonstating with each other, Churchmen were seeking to draw it into the Establishment, and Dissenters increased its distractions by discussions of its system as incoherent and impracticable.

Coke, who was traveling in America, hastened home, after receiving the news of Wesley's death, "overwhelmed with sorrow." On reaching England, May 14, 1791, he quickly perceived the public danger by the "severe and irritating trials" which he met from some of his ministerial co-laborers, who unfavorably suspected the motive of his sudden return.[1]

William Thompson, a commanding man among his brethren, and honored as their first president after Wesley, was "Assistant" or superintendent of the Halifax circuit. He endeavored to prepare his ministerial associates for the difficulties of their approaching Conference. In about a month after Wesley's death he sent out a private circular, signed also by Benson, Bradburn, Hopper, and others, addressed to the "preachers in general and the assistants in particular," and enumerating the dangers which now threatened the Church. After showing the impossibility of the appointment of a personal substitute for Wesley, by reason of the Deed of Declaration, they proposed that the vacancies in the Conference should be filled up according to seniority; a president, secretary, and conference stewards be appointed for one year; a member be designated yearly to preside in the Irish Conference, and committees authorized to manage the affairs of districts, from Conference to Conference, throughout the three kingdoms.[2]

This Halifax circular led to further meetings of leading preachers on the 13th of April at Halifax, and on the 21st of April and 5th of May at Leeds. Its propositions were approved and enlarged at these successive consultations. Meanwhile its suggestions were discussed throughout the country. The preachers in the city and vicinity of Bristol assembled and passed resolutions of similar import on the 11th of May; a meeting was held at Carmarthen, Wales, on the 12th for the same purpose; and, by the influence of Adam Clarke, the preachers in Dublin voted in the same spirit. The lay members of the societies, unwilling that their pastors should have the exclusive control of the question, were soon in motion. An important convention of Cornish Methodists was held in Redruth on the 14th of June, and sent to every preacher of the Conference a private account of its proceedings, which virtually pronounced the Halifax circular defective in the most essential points, and proposed revolutionary changes respecting the appointment of leaders, local stewards, circuit stewards, the admission and expulsion of members and preachers, the alteration of circuits, and even the powers of the Annual Conference that Wesley himself had fixed by his Deed of Declaration. Meanwhile the officers of the Birmingham Societies met, and issued a printed circular opposed to all these changes, and to any important modification of the economy of the body, as left by Wesley. The diversified opinions of the Connection were, in fine, resolving themselves into three classes, and giving rise to as many parties, composed respectively of men who, from their attachment to the Establishment, wished no change unless it might be a greater subordination to the National Church by the abandonment of the sacraments in those cases where Wesley had admitted them; of such as wished to maintain Wesley's plan intact, with official provisions which might be requisite to administer it; and such as desired revolutionary changes with a more equal distribution of powers among laymen and preachers.

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[1] Drew's Life of Coke, chapters 11 and 12.

[2] Memoir of Entwisle, chap. 3; Smith's History of Methodism, II, 4, 3.

It was not difficult to perceive that if the Church was to be saved the middle party must prevail for the present. Even should its principles be pronounced not abstractly the best, it was evident that they were practically the best for the time being.

While the preachers and many of the societies were perplexed with the question of the organization of the Conference and of the polity of the Connection, the people were more generally interested in the "sacramental question." We have seen how Wesley himself was embarrassed by this problem. The most delicate task of his administration was to reconcile his regard for the Established Church with his duty to his societies in this respect. He not only conceded the sacraments to some of the latter, but he went so far as to ordain several of his preachers for their administration; but by far the greater number of his people were dependent upon the national clergy for these means of grace; clergy, many of whom were either profligate in their lives, or more or less open persecutors of the Methodist itinerants. A large proportion of the Methodists had been Dissenters, and were, whether conscientiously or whimsically, unwilling to resort to the national Church for the sacraments.[3]

It may be doubted whether the greatest defect of Wesley's administration was not his tardiness to provide for this demand of his people. The partial concession he made to them could only render necessary, at last, the universal admission of their claim; and now that he could no longer direct them, the critical settlement of the question was left to his preachers, amid general contention and confusion which were to result in two important and permanent schisms, one in England, the other in Ireland.

He had been dead but little more than two months before the parties occasioned by this question began publicly to wrangle through the press. On the 4th of May eighteen laymen of Hull issued a protest against the allowance of the sacrament in Methodist chapels, and against any further deviation from the Established Church. Similar declarations were made at Birmingham, Sheffield, and other important places. Counter declarations came from many towns, and, in some instances, from the same Churches. The Connection generally was now involved in the controversy. The preachers, of course, could not but become complicated in the strife. Pawson denounced the Hull circular as "impertinent and foolish." Mather opposed it. Benson promoted the circulation of the Birmingham resolutions. Atmore, Hanby, Miles, Taylor, Hopper, Bradburn, and other influential preachers favored the administration of the sacraments; and in the next year Pawson and Hanby ordained Taylor, Bradburn, and Snowden at Manchester, that they might meet in part the claim of the people. Myles, Roberts, and Adam Clarke were present, and would also have received ordination at this time had they not preferred to wait until the conference.[4] Three preachers were also ordained at Newcastle.

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[3] "A minority were such, [members of the national Church,] others were accustomed to hear the gospel among the Nonconformists; but the greater mass of them were persons who had belonged to no church, and many of them had not even been baptized." Etheridge's Adam Clarke, I, 9.

Early in this controversy a man of great energy, and destined to become historically distinguished as the founder of a Methodist sect, began a course of persistent agitation on the subject by printed pamphlets.

Alexander Kilham has already been represented in our narrative as the attendant and effective co-laborer of Brackenbury, in the introduction of Methodism into the Channel Islands. He was born in Epworth, July 10, 1762, of Methodist parents, who trained him strictly in their own religious principles. During his childhood he was often deeply affected by their instructions; and religious impressions, received as early as his fourth year, remained indelible through his life. His impetuous temper, however, defeated his frequently formed good resolutions, and for many years he wavered between piety and vice, suffering, as he says, "miserable hours, with the conviction that his life was not agreeable to the Scriptures, and an habitual unwillingness to forsake his sins." "My parents," he writes, "often begged me with tears to forsake the ways of sin and death; but all their persuasions had no effect on me: I obstinately stiffened my neck against their admonitions, and determined to be independent of them, being resolved neither to fear God nor them." Repeatedly, however, did he pass through paroxysms of religious feeling, which were supposed to be genuine proofs of conversion, but with as frequent relapses, till, when about eighteen years old, his attention was arrested at a prayer-meeting in Epworth. After weeping and praying for hours, "I found," he writes, "a sudden change in my mind; I could not weep if I might have had the world for it; but I found a great love to every one around me, and my heart was filled with unspeakable joy. I did not know what had passed within me, only that my heart was changed from mourning to rejoicing; my friends rejoiced over me, exhorting me to cast myself on the mercy of God; they warned me of Satan's devices, assuring me that he would endeavor to ensnare me with doubts and fears."

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[4] Biography of Atmore, Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 215: "Mr. Clarke seems determined to be ordained, but wishes it to be done publicly."

In a few weeks he began to "exhort" in the social religious assemblies of the town. He united with a band of Methodists to conduct similar meetings in the adjacent villages. His neighbors and the circuit itinerants encouraged him at last to preach. He delivered his first sermon in Luddington with manifest success. Brackenbury paused at Epworth on a preaching excursion; he was a gentleman of wealth and high social position, but had become by Wesley's influence an irregular itinerant, and a generous benefactor of the Methodist societies. He needed a companion in his travels; young Kilham offered himself, and they set out on their evangelical wanderings, master and servant both preaching, exhorting, and praying with the villagers wherever they sojourned.[5] As Brackenbury could speak the French language, Wesley sent them to the Channel Islands, where they founded the societies which have since decked those beautiful insular spots with Wesleyan chapels, and sent forth missionaries—De Quetteville, Mahy, Pontavice, De Jersey, Toase, Olivier, Hawtrey, and their successors—to France.[6]

Young Kilham labored energetically and successfully among the islanders. They especially found "the squire's man" an important substitute when Brackenbury was sick, which was often the case. The new missionaries had a difficult work to achieve there, but they courageously achieved it. Kilham describes the people as unusually degraded; "they had liquor so exceedingly cheap that they were slaves to drunkenness, swearing, gambling, and every other vice." With his zealous master he bore the standard of the cross into their midst. He was often mobbed, his voice drowned by riotous noises in the chapels, he was struck with stones and dirt while preaching, threatened with "duckings," and otherwise maltreated by hosts of rabble, who were armed with bludgeons. His master was treated with no more courtesy; the mob hooted him while preaching, broke the chapel windows, and threw gunpowder and fire among the hearers. Throughout the struggle Kilham says he "found not the least fear." "I could truly say," he adds, "the Lord is my shield and buckler, my God in whom I trust and confide. I am thine, O Lord; do as thou pleasest with thy servant; make me wholly thine for time and eternity; purify my soul and keep me from sin that it may not grieve me, and that I may be thine forever."

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[5] Life of Mr. Alexander Kilham, Methodist Preacher, etc. Nottingham, n. d. Early Methodist writers represent him as the servant of Brackenbury; his biographers dissent from this intimation; his own language, hereafter cited, favors it. The fact is rather creditable than otherwise to him.

[6] See vol. ii, book v, chap. 11.

As usual with the itinerant evangelists of that day, they triumphed in the contest, and revolutionized the moral condition of the islands.

Leaving the Channel, Kilham traveled about England with his preaching master. Wesley received him at last (1785) to the regular itinerant ministry, and sent him forth a zealous but well-trained laborer. Brackenbury had treated him rather as an equal, a Christian brother, than as a servant. "Blessed be God forever," he wrote, "for appointing me to travel with Mr. Brackenbury; I found him a blessing to me." "I found my master's preaching and conversation exceedingly profitable to me, and he did not disdain to instruct me how I might be acceptable in the sight of the Lord and useful to the people. I found myself much united to him, and was thankful to the Lord for his goodness and love to such an unworthy worm." He records interviews with Brackenbury in later times, in which they had "comfortable seasons together" united in secret devotion, "conversed freely with each other respecting the Lord's dealings" with them and "the things of eternity," and parted with prayer, 'recommending each other to the grace of God."

In his various appointments after his return from the Channel he labored zealously, and had frequent encounters with mobs. At Bolton his chapel was stoned; at Alford market-place he was attacked by a clergyman and a constable; at Spilsby he was assailed with dirt and eggs; in another place gunpowder was laid under the spot where he expected to preach, with a train extending some distance, but, without any reason for the change, he took his stand elsewhere and escaped the danger. During these times his mind was in the highest religious fervor. "O my God," he wrote, "accept a heart that pants for thee; thou knowest I would fain give myself to thee, and live to thy glory; enlighten my understanding, that I may be able to divide the word of truth aright; give me to abhor everything like affectation; let me have the grace that would preserve me from whatever would give just cause of offense to thy people; grant me always thy Holy Spirit in preaching and prayer, and help me truly to go forward to declare thy counsel to sinners."

At heart he was a Dissenter; he favored the wish of the Methodist people for the sacraments, and, three years before the death of Wesley, he records his design of petitioning the Conference "to let us have the liberty of Englishmen, and to give the Lord's Supper to our societies." About the time of Wesley's death he wrote: "I have had several warm contests with a friend because I would not have my child baptized in the usual way. The storm, however, soon blew over. I hope God will open the eyes of the Methodists to see their sin and folly in their inconsistent connection with the Church." A few months later he writes: "The curse of God is upon us, and we cannot prosper till the Lord pardon our having bowed in the house of Rimmon." He had caught the spirit of the times, and the energetic zeal which had borne him onward was henceforward to expend itself mostly in the new disputes, in pamphleteering, and the advocacy of ultral democratic views of Church government. He wrote with a vigor which showed strength of temperament if not of intellect, with an aptness and directness and a species of blunt logic, which might have been envied by his contemporaries in similar but political agitations, Paine, Cobbett, and Wilkes. His style has the imperfections usual to self-educated writers; but in his more pungent passages it takes from his ardent feelings a forceful tone, and at times a genuine eloquence.

As soon as he received the Hull circular in favor of the adherence of the Methodists to the national Church, he resolved to reply to it, but did so anonymously, mailing his manuscript at York, and sending it to the Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne for publication. It produced no little excitement; it rallied the party which shared his opinions, and was resented by all who were attached to the Establishment. The opposite forces were thus discriminated, and the controversy openly began.

In these ominous circumstances the forty-eighth Conference commenced at Manchester, July 26, 1791. Some of the members had assembled in the town a few days before the session to prepare its business. On the 24th Benson preached a powerful sermon in the Oldham-street Chapel on the text, "Remember them that have the rule over you who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." The anxious congregation crowded the house within and without, and was deeply affected, especially during the last prayer.[7]

More than three hundred preachers attended the session, a larger number than ever convened before. All seemed impressed with the common danger, and an unusual spirit of prayer prevailed for divine direction. The devout temper of the body saved it. It continued in session till the eighth of the ensuing month, and was characterized throughout by a cautious temper and mutual forbearance "It had long been predicted," wrote Atmore, "by our adversaries, and feared by our friends, that a division in the body would take place. But though we found ourselves peculiarly circumstanced, having to adopt a new mode of government, and the preachers and people being much divided in their sentiments with regard to our relative situation and connection with the Church of England, such was the great love of God, and his care over his Church, that the 'unity of the Spirit' was preserved among us; and the hopes of our foes, together with the fearful forebodings of our friends, were happily frustrated." Adam Clarke corroborates this statement; "I have been," he says, "at several conferences, but have never seen one in which the spirit of unity, love, and a sound mind so generally prevailed. I would have this intelligence transmitted from Dan to Beersheba, and let the earth know that the dying words of our revered father have had their accomplishment: *The best of all is, God is with us.*"[8]

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[7] Treffry's Life of Benson, chap. 6.

William Thompson was elected president and Dr. Coke secretary. Thompson was an Irishman, of grave and dignified character, a ready and perspicuous speaker, wise and moderate in counsel, and more than sixty years of age. He had traveled in the ministry thirty-four years, and had possessed the confidence of Wesley and his brethren.[9] His opinions on Church government were moderate; all parties recognized him as an intermediate and safe man, and his share in the Halifax consultations and "Circular" assured them of his foresight and solicitude for the safe settlement of the Connection.

The first act of the Conference, after its organization, was to receive from Joseph Bradford, the traveling companion of Wesley, a letter which the latter had left as his "last words" for them. It was addressed to the legal Conference of "one hundred." "I beseech you," it said, "by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit. In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood school, in disposing of the yearly contribution, and the Preachers' Fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even unto the end." The Conference unanimously agreed to follow this advice, and voted that all the preachers, who should be in full connection with them, should have every privilege that the members of the Conference possessed, so far as the Deed of Declaration would allow.[10]

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[8] Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, pp. 211, 212.

[9] Life of Bunting, by T. P. Bunting, vol. i, chap. 7. Myles's Chronological History of the Methodists, chap. xi.

After adjusting some difficulties with the executors of Wesley, and Dr. Whitehead his biographer,[11] it proceeded to consider the state of the Connection as affected by the new controversies. It pledged itself to follow strictly the plan left by Wesley. To mitigate the evils of the prevalent agitation, and the expense of the preachers for postage on "circulars," it was resolved that all such letters should be returned to the persons from whom they were sent. The suggestion of "Districts," by the Halifax and other meetings of preachers, was approved by the Conference as affording a basis for its future administration, and it formed all its circuits into districts, assigning not less than three or more than eight of the former to each of the latter. England comprised seventeen, Ireland five, Scotland two, Wales one. The "assistants" of circuits were authorized to summon the preachers of their districts, who were in "full connection," on any critical case which needed their attention. The preachers were to assemble at the place and time appointed by the assistant, and form a committee for the purpose of determining the business on which they were called. They must choose a chairman for the occasion, and their decision must be final till the meeting of the next Conference, when the chairman of the committee must lay the minutes of their proceedings before the Conference, provided, nevertheless, that nothing should be done by the committee contrary to the resolutions of the Conference. It was also ordained that the committee of every district in England and Scotland should elect one of their body to form a committee, whose duty it should be to draw up a plan for the stationing of the preachers; which committee was required to meet at the place where the Conference should sit, three days in the week preceding the annual session, in order to prepare the appointments; it was also required that the committee of every district in Ireland should send one of their number to meet the delegate from the British Conference, two days before the Irish Conference, for the same purpose—a substitute for Wesley's function of making the appointments, and the first example of the "Stationing Committee."[12]

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[10] Minutes of 1791.

[11] For a full account of these difficulties (of no permanent interest) see the Life of Henry Moore, ann. 1791; and Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism, ii, 5, 1.

Though Wesley's Deed of Declaration allowed three successive appointments of the same man to the same place, it was voted that no preacher should be appointed to the same circuit more than two successive years, "unless God had been pleased to use him as the instrument of a remarkable revival." Dr. Coke was appointed to preside in the next Irish Conference, and it was voted that no letters of complaint, or on circuit business, should be written to England on account of this appointment, and that the committee of districts should determine all appeals whatsoever during the intervals of the Conference, and all applications on society business which could not be determined by circuit assistants.

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[12] Minutes of 1791. Myles, ann. 1791.

The solution thus given to the actual difficulties of the Conference was remarkably simple, moderate, and direct; and, though it could not suffice for the prospective embarrassments of the Connection, it was all that could be wisely accomplished in its present circumstances. It had at least the moral effect of assuring the public mind that the fate of the body was in prudent hands.

Wilberforce addressed a letter and documents on the slave-trade to the Conference, and received a hearty pledge of its co-operation in his labors against that traffic.

The statistical returns of this session showed that the year had been prosperous. The circuits had increased from 108 to 115.[13] France appears for the first time on the list; William Mahy was pursuing there his faithful and suffering course.[14] Twelve preachers were admitted on trial; 326 received appointments; 5 ceased to travel; 2 had died since the preceding session; 109 wives of preachers were to be provided for, from which fact it may be inferred that about two thirds of the itinerants remained single.

Fifteen candidates were placed on a reserve list, as not immediately needed in the itinerant service, an example which has become a permanent feature in the Wesleyan system.

The reported numbers in the societies were 78,993. In the British Islands there were 72,468; in British America and the West Indies 6,525. The increase for the year was 1,825; more than half these gains were in the West Indies and British America.

The increase in the United States of America was more than three times that of the parent body and its foreign dependencies, being 5,638, and the aggregate membership

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[13] This fact is not, however, so much an indication of growth as of changes of the circuits.

[14] See vol. ii, book v, chap. 11.

63,269.[15] Methodism was rapidly spreading over the territory of the republic. Fourteen Conferences were held during the preceding year, two of them beyond the Alleghanies, whither Asbury had gone on horseback, braving the hardships and Indian perils of the frontier; twenty circuits were added to the list, including Savannah in the South, and Boston in the East. Jesse Lee had penetrated New England and was traversing its states, forming societies and circuits. Early in 1791 he founded at Lynn the first Methodist chapel in the State of Massachusetts. During the present year thirteen Conferences were held, and ten new circuits organized, one in Upper Canada, whither William Losee, a member of the New York Conference, had gone through the wilderness of Western New York, enduring severe privations but beginning an evangelical work which has spread over the whole country to the remotest settlements of the North, and to Puget's Sound on the Pacific Ocean. Asbury, after traversing the South, preaching daily, entered New England for the first time. He passed rapidly through Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts to Boston and Lynn. At the latter place he wrote: "Here we shall make a firm stand, and from this central point shall the light of Methodism radiate through the state." The prophecy has since become history.

The devout spirit of the Conference of 1791 pervaded all its proceedings. Its members were too deeply impressed with the sense of their critical position to allow unhallowed passions to affect their doings, or to suffer irritating language to escape their lips.[16] At the examination of twelve candidates, the older preachers wept around them as the pledges of future success; at their public reception similar emotion prevailed in the congregation. Entwisle, who was one of the received probationers, describes the scene as peculiarly solemn: "Hopper, whose usefulness, age, wisdom, and experience rendered him truly venerable, opened the meeting by prayer; he prayed till he could pray no longer for weeping. Preachers and people seemed to have similar feelings, and the whole congregation felt the divine power in a very remarkable manner. For my own part I felt what I never did before. I seemed to receive a new commission, and I do believe that I experienced something of what Paul speaks of in 1 Tim. iv, 14."[17] An early historian of Methodism says: "The business being ended the Conference broke up. Great was the comfort of the preachers, that such a foundation was laid for the peace and prosperity of the societies. The Lord they saw was better to them than their boding fears. His servants were of one heart and one mind. The voice of thanksgiving ascended up on high, and they departed to their usual circuits blessing and praising God."[18]

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[15] Bangs's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, sub ann. The Minutes for the year are inaccurate.

[16] Treffry's Benson, chap. 6.

The pledge of the Conference to "follow strictly Mr. Wesley's plan" was vague, and was variously interpreted. The controversy could not but be resumed, and more definite results must be reached before the Church could be at rest. Partisans of the national Church regarded the pledge as binding the Methodists to the Establishment; the advocates of progress dissented, and, in the language of Pawson, declared "not so; our old plan has been to follow the openings of Providence, and to alter or amend the plan as we saw it needful, in order to be more useful in the hand of God."[19] Hanby, whom Wesley had authorized to administer the sacraments, still claimed the right to do so wherever the societies wished him. Pawson wrote, the same year, that if the people were denied the sacraments they would leave the Connection in many places. Taylor was determined to administer them at Liverpool;[20] and Atmore wrote, that having "solemnly promised upon his knees, before God and his people, that he would give all diligence, not only to preach the word, but to administer the sacraments in the Church of God," he would do so wherever required by the people. "We were as much divided," he later wrote, "in our views and practice as before; and numerous disputes occurred during the year respecting the administration of the sacraments, and a total separation from the Church of England. Circular letters in great abundance were sent into different parts of the kingdom, and the minds of the people were much diverted from the pursuit of more sublime objects, by others which tended but little to the profit of the soul." Of course, the zealous spirit of Kilham was roused again by these new demonstrations. He had been appointed by the Conference to the Newcastle circuit under the superintendence of Cownley, a veteran whom Wesley had ordained, who had now traveled as a preacher nearly half a century, and who sympathized with the popular demand for the sacraments. The society at Newcastle was divided on the question. Cownley administered the Lord's Supper at a neighboring village chapel; three class leaders and about a score of the members of the city society left the Connection at once. A private correspondence ensued between Cownley and the dissentients. A pamphlet was issued against him by a layman, and Kilham immediately answered it in a printed "Address to the Members and Friends of the Methodist Society in Newcastle."[21] Great excitement ensued; the Newcastle district meeting on the 8th of May, 1792, declared that the people ought to have liberty to worship God in the way that they deem proper, and concluded its proceedings with the administration of the eucharist among themselves. The dissentients in the society were alarmed, several printed letters appeared, and Taylor and Bradburn issued pamphlets in favor of the claim of the societies.

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[17] Memoirs of Entwisle by his son, chap. 5. Bristol, 1848.

[18] Myles's Chron. Hist. of Meth., chap. 8.

[19] Smith's History, II, 4, 1.

[20] Wesleyan Mag., 1845, p. 214.

Pawson, Taylor, and other preachers commended the course of Kilham, but his publication was denounced by others as unwarrantably severe and impolitic. It referred to his opponents as "a few bigoted persons who never think for themselves," and declared that the connection of the Wesleyans with the national Church could be looked upon as nothing else than a "specious trimming between God and the world," and that he had never heard any arguments in its favor which "were not political or, in other words, carnal, and sold under sin." [22]

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[21] Kilham's Life, p. 56.

While the agitation was raging and extending, the Conference of 1792 met in London on the 31st of July. The venerable Alexander Mather, who had preached thirty-five years, and whom Wesley had ordained as a superintendent or bishop, was elected President. Dr. Coke was chosen Secretary. Kilham was censured by formal vote for his pamphlet. Bradburn and others vindicated him; but Coke moved for his expulsion. He made some qualified acknowledgements and was continued in the Conference. After much perplexity and debate respecting the preparation of Wesley's biography by Dr. Whitehead, the Conference proceeded to discuss the sacramental question. Many petitions were presented in favor of the wishes of the people, and also remonstrances against them. The preachers were divided in opinion on the subject. "For some time," says one of them, "they knew not what to do. They were sensible that either to allow or to refuse the privilege would greatly increase the uneasiness, and perhaps cause a division." [23] Profoundly embarrassed by its difficulties, and unable to reach its solution by discussion, an extraordinary measure was proposed by Pawson as the only means of concluding the debate, and as affording a common ground of mutual concession at least, till time should bring them nearer to unanimity. They resolved to determine it for the present by lot. However questionable this proceeding may appear, the scene was one of affecting solemnity, as exhibiting the difficulties and the forbearing spirit of these good men. They knelt while four members offered pray ers. "Almost all the preachers were in tears," and "the glory of God filled the room."[24] Adam Clarke was appointed to draw the lot. He stood upon a table and proclaimed it: "You shall not give the sacrament this year." Valton, who was present, says: "His voice, in reading it, was like a voice from the clouds. A solemn awe rested upon the assembly, and we could say, 'The Lord is here of a truth.' All were satisfied or submitted, and harmony and love returned."[25]

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[22] An Address, etc., p. 20.

[23] Myles's Chron. Hist., ann. 1792.

No little animadversion, on this act, followed.[26] Atmore afterward wrote that "whether this were not tempting the Lord has been doubted by many; and I acknowledge, from the result of the measure, I have been led to question its propriety myself; for it is a fact that the number of members in the Society, whether from that cause or any other, (God knoweth!) decreased, during the ensuing year, by several hundreds. Such a circumstance had not before occurred since the Most High raised up the people called Methodists."[27] All admitted, nevertheless, that, "however they might differ in sentiment, they were more united than ever." It should be borne in mind that the controversy itself was not intended to be thus decided, but merely the question of the postponement of its decision and of a concurrent course, on the part of the preachers, for a single year.

The Conference sent forth an address to the Societies on the course it had taken. It was the first address to them ever issued by that body.

It was resolved that no ordination should be permitted in the Connection without the consent of the Conference first obtained, and that any violation of this vote should exclude the offender from the body. The performance of religious services, in any new place, during "church hours," was also prohibited, except when express permission should be voted by the Conference.

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[24] Minutes of 1792.

[25] Extract from Valton's MS. Journal, in Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 217.

[26] Mr. Mark Robinson, of Yorkshire, who, with the aid of several clergymen, attempted to draw up a new constitution for Methodism, denounced it; and Blomfield, Bishop of London, severely censured it. (Twelve Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, London, 1828.) For a judicious reply to the bishop see Wes. Mag., 1828, p. 596.

[27] Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 217.

The spread of insurrectionary pamphlets through the country, produced by the influence of French politics, alarmed all good citizens, and the Conference voted that "none of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which he lives. We are to observe that the oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers, and that honor to the king is there connected with the fear of God." Severe language in the prevailing Church controversy was also prohibited.

It was ordained that the same person should not be rechosen President of the Conference more than once in eight years, and also that the President's powers should cease as soon as the Conference ended. The last enactment directly contravened the provision of Wesley's deed, as enrolled in Chancery, which declares that the President shall continue in office "until the election of another President at the next or other subsequent year."[28] It was doubtless an inadvertence. Regulations were adopted requiring all the preachers of any district, who should be present at the Conferences, to meet, after the appointments were settled, and choose their district chairman; also authorizing the chairman to call district meetings at the demand of preachers or people, for the purpose of trying complaints against any preacher; and making the chairman himself subject to trial and suspension, or deposition from the chair, or from the office of superintendent, by the district meeting, to be called by a circuit superintendent, should the chairman be charged with any crime, misdemeanor, or a refusal to call a district meeting when there were sufficient reasons for calling it.

The number of circuits reported at this session was 121, showing an increase of 6; 29 candidates were received on trial, 8 of them in Ireland; 3 preachers had died since the preceding session; 1 "desisted from traveling;" 350 were enrolled on the list of appointments, 19 of these were in Scotland, 73 in Ireland, 9 in the North American British Provinces, and 13 in the West Indies. Only one was reported on the Reserve List.

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[28] Myles, ann. 1792.

The members of the societies amounted to 81,748: of these 74,124 were in the British Islands; 1,070 in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland; 6,554 in the West Indies. The aggregate increase was 2,755; the domestic gains amounted to 1,656; those of British America and the West Indies to 1,099.

The returns from the United States (always reported in the British Minutes)[29] amounted to 65,980 members and 266 preachers, with an increase, for the year, of 2,711 members and 16 preachers. No less than eighteen Annual Conferences were held in this year; eleven new circuits were organized, some of them of great length; some in South Carolina and Georgia, others in New England and Upper Canada. Asbury penetrated to the wilds of Tennessee, accompanied by an armed guard to protect him from the native savages. He had to swim the rivers, to sleep on the ground, or watch all night with the sentinels, and endure other hardships scarcely conceivable to the inhabitants of that prosperous state in our day. "How much I have suffered in this journey," he wrote, "is known only to God."[30] Jesse Lee was meantime extending his plans in the New England states; two new circuits were reported there, Needham in Massachusetts and Providence in Rhode Island. Boston returned 15 members; the aggregate returns from all New England were 1,358. A memorable event in Eastern Methodism occurred this year—the first session of the New England Conference was held in the yet unfinished chapel at Lynn. Asbury presided in it amid eight preachers, the laborious founders of the great Methodist interest which has since extended through all the Eastern states, and erected its edifices in almost all their villages.

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[29] They are, however, almost always given erroneously. Smith (Hist. of Meth., II, 5, 1) gives the American increase this year at 7,356; it was not half that number, as seen above. See Bangs's Hist. of M. E. Church, ann. 1792.

[30] Asbury's Journal, ann. 1792.

The London Conference adjourned with profound gratitude for the temporary relief of its controversial embarrassments, but not without equally profound anxieties. Near midnight, on the last day of its session, the question was asked, What shall we do more to promote the work of God? Rising from their seats, they declared in a united covenant, "We do at this solemn hour of the night devote ourselves to the service of Almighty God in a more unreserved and entire manner than ever we have hitherto done, and are all determined to spend and be spent in his blessed work." The covenant was preceded by importunate prayer, and followed by a song of praise, when the whole assembly again prostrated itself in prayer; after which it "parted," says one of its members, "in the utmost love and harmony."[31]

Though the decision by lot had settled the practical question of the controversy for the year, and restored comparative harmony, the agitation could not be entirely repressed. Many important societies, like those of Liverpool and Manchester, deemed the course of the Conference a serious grievance. Many of the preachers saw, as Pawson subsequently declared, that "unless liberty were given to those societies which wished the sacrament, there would be a division among the preachers and the people." Not a few of the former considered that their rights as ministers of the Gospel were compromised by the hesitancy of the Conference, and Adam Clarke, already a man of commanding influence, avowed that he "would have liberty of conscience if he had to go to the ends of the earth for it."[32]

Soon after the session some of the trustees at Bristol induced Bradburn and Roberts to appear in gowns, surplices, and bands, and to read the Liturgy, at the opening of the Portland-street Chapel. The trustees of the old chapel, called the "Old Room," vehemently opposed this innovation. The parish clergymen wrote a pamphlet against it. The denominational controversy became immediately involved in the discussion which ensued, and agitation was rekindled in many places. Bradburn, who had no little skill with the pen, answered pungently the Bristol clergymen in a pamphlet. The trustees of the old chapel published a reply to it, advocating the "old plan," and disclaiming any responsibility for the new measure. Bradburn rejoined, sustained by the signatures of all the preachers of the circuit, of all the trustees of the new Chapel and of other laymen. The dissident trustees were six; it was obvious that the "reformers" had a decided preponderance. The preachers prudently abandoned the offensive measure, but not the right to resume it at their discretion. It had, however, tested the spirit of the Connection, and proved its imminent peril. The conservative party in the Broadmead and Guinea-street chapels, Bristol, and the New chapel, London, issued a letter, addressed to the Conference, impeaching the preachers as departing from "the original plan of Methodism for the purpose of converting the societies into separate Churches"—a document which the next Conference answered by a circular letter, repelling these imputations, but only thereby adding fuel to the fire.

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[31] Atmore: see Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 217.

[32] Smith's Hist., II, 4, 1.

Kilham's zealous spirit could not brook these disputes in silence. He had been appointed, by the Conference of 1792, superintendent of a Scotch circuit, where he could indulge his disposition to administer the Lord's Supper, as the national Church was there no obstacle to his views. He now published a circular, addressed to "all Local Preachers, Circuit Stewards," etc. It bore two assumed names, defended his last pamphlet, reflected severely upon the preceding Conference as treating with "gross insult" the petitions addressed to it, and threatened that "we will be heard or our resentment shall be felt." It also submitted a new system of government for the Connection, involving radical changes. The secret of its authorship was so cautiously kept that he escaped any animadversion at the ensuing Conference. His appeal had no little effect; the progressive and conservative forces were both aroused by it to renewed activity.

The Conference of 1793 commenced July 29, at Leeds, with a determination to avoid abrupt measures, while it would make all possible concessions. It contemplated with deep anxiety the prospects of the Church. John Pawson was elected President, and Dr. Coke Secretary. On the preceding day (Sunday) powerful sermons were preached by M'Allum, Bradburn, Adam Clarke, and Mather.[33] The temper of the body was hallowed and assured by these preliminary devotions. Atmore, who was present, wrote exultingly: "Our Conference began; there appeared a blessed spirit of love among us, which, I hope, is a token for good. On Tuesday our grand debate on the administration of the sacraments began. I had my fears, but they were disappointed. I had my hopes, but they were exceeded. Never did I more clearly see the gracious interposition of the 'God of peace,' or the manifest defeat of the designs of the sowers of discord. The subject was discussed on both sides with great candor and impartiality; great earnestness was evinced, but no undue warmth of spirit. The result was that we should submit to each other in the fear of God. We therefore resolved that in those places where the members of the Society were unanimous in their desire for the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at the hands of their own preachers, it should be granted; that all distinctions between ordained and unordained ministers should cease; and that being received into full connection by the Conference, and appointed by them to administer the ordinances, should be considered a sufficient ordination, without the imposition of hands." He adds that the vote stood eighty-six for and forty-eight against these propositions; they were adopted, therefore, by a majority of thirty-eight. He alludes to the spirit of the Conference as characterized by much religious fervor. "On the Lord's day," he says, "I intended to hear Mr. Pawson, but could not enter the chapel on account of the crowd; James Rogers preached in the yard to several thousands. We had a most excellent time at the admission of the brethren into full connection. The power of God was very sensibly felt. On Monday evening I was greatly edified under a sermon by Mr. Benson, from, 'He that winneth souls is wise.' O that this wisdom may be mine! On Thursday evening we concluded our peaceful Conference as we began, in the name of Jesus. After sitting a few minutes in profound silence, we rose up and sang with great solemnity the Covenant Hymn, and thus engaged ourselves afresh unto the Lord. We then ratified our sacred vows by partaking of the memorials of our Saviour's dying love; and afterward we commended each other to God, in whom we feel that we are one. O that we may ever be kept so!" Adam Clarke confirms this representation of the spirit of the session: "Since we were a people," he remarks, "we never had such a Conference; heaven and earth have been united, harmony and unity alone have prevailed. Our business has met with uncommon dispatch; the particulars relative to the sacramental question have been adjusted in the most excellent way that, I believe, could have been devised, in order to meet the wishes of both parties." Entwisle records that "there was much of God in this Conference." Hopper and others, of the oldest preachers, said that "they never saw so excellent a spirit at any time, or felt so much of the Divine Spirit." Entwisle describes the public services as deeply affecting, especially the reception of twenty candidates in the presence of about four thousand people. They stood at the altar before the crowded assembly, "weeping exceedingly." Mather addressed to them an exhortation and prayed; Hopper, prayed in "a most melting manner," after which Pawson, as President, concluded the ceremony with prayer. "It was like another pentecost; people, both professors of religion and others, were weeping on every side."[34] It was the semicentenary Conference, and its spirit befitted the occasion.

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[33] Atmore, in Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 220.

The administration of the Eucharist was conceded wherever it was unanimously demanded by the Societies, in order "to prevent discord;" the concession was prudent, as it was really available in some Societies, and could become so generally, though gradually, by the advancement of public opinion. To divest it of any apparent clerical pretensions, it was voted that none of the preachers should wear gowns, cassocks, bands, or surplices, and that the title "Reverend" should not be used by them.[35] The Conference sent forth an address to the people stating the "dilemma," or "difficulty" in which it was placed by the contending parties. "A few of our Societies," it said, "have repeatedly importuned us to grant them the liberty of receiving the Lord's Supper from their own preachers. But, desirous of adhering most strictly to the plan which Mr. Wesley laid down, we again and again denied their request. The subject, however, is now come to its crisis. We find that we have no alternative but to comply with their requisition or entirely to lose them. O brethren, we hate putting away, especially those who are members of the mystical body of Christ and our dearly beloved brethren, and whose only error, where they do err, is that of the judgment, not of the heart. And can we suffer these to forsake their faithful pastors, and possibly to run into the jaws of some ravenous wolf, when the point in contest must be allowed by all to be *unessential* to salvation."

Among its other proceedings it ordained that one preacher should attend its sessions from Ireland and one from Scotland; that no division of a circuit should be made without the consent of the District Meeting and the Committee of Delegates, as well as of the Conference, and that the erection of chapels and of parsonages, and also the payment of their debts, should be settled in the District Meetings. Provisions were made for the trial and suspension of accused preachers by committees of preachers, in the interim of the Conference sessions, and a general collection in the Societies for the West India Missions was ordered.

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[34] Mem. of Entwisle, chap. 5.

[35] Minutes 1793. Myles's, Chron. Hist. chap. 8.

The statistics of the session show 362 preachers on the Conference roll, besides 11 on the Reserve List; 70 were appointed to Ireland, 19 to Scotland, 9 to British North America, and 14 to the West Indies. The number received on trial was 26; 7 had died since the preceding session; 31 probationers were admitted into full membership; 4 desisted from traveling. The circuits amounted to 131, showing an increase of 10.[36] The membership, under the care of the Conference, was reported to be 75,025 in the domestic societies, (including 100 in the army at Gibraltar,) 7,840 in British North America and the West Indies, 223 in Africa, making a total of 83,088. The increase amounted to 2,340.

In the United States of America the members amounted to 67,643; the increase to 1,663.

The aggregate membership in both hemispheres was 150,731; the aggregate increase was 4,003.

Nineteen Annual Conferences were held in the course of the year in the United States. Twelve new circuits were formed; one was named the "Province of Maine," and another "Savannah," thus uniting the Northern and Southern extremities of the nation.

Though the Conference closed on Thursday the 8th of August, it met for formal adjournment the next morning at five o'clock. Some time was spent in mutual exhortation and in prayer. "It affected my heart," wrote Entwisle, "to see the old men, Mr. Hopper particularly, weeping, and to hear him say he had lived to see glorious things; that this was the best Conference he had attended in upward of forty years. Glory be to God!"

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[36] Their number given in the Minutes is 132; but this is erroneous. (See Smith's History, etc., II, 5, 1.) It should be stated that the list of circuits does not include the appointments in the West Indies and British North America.

Again was the unity of the body saved as much by its good spirit as by its policy. Pawson, its President, wrote: "We were in no small danger of dividing; many fully expected that we should, and labored to accomplish it; but they were again happily disappointed."[37]

Hoping, praying, but with trembling solicitude, these prudent and forbearing men went forth to their circuits expecting another year's conflict with the trial which was so severely testing them. It was, however, to be a comparatively quiet year. An extensive religious interest prevailed, absorbing the public mind and repairing somewhat the losses of the preceding year; for though an increase of members had been reported at the last Conference, the agitations had impaired the domestic prosperity of the Church, and its gains were in its foreign fields. Kilham, who did not attend the Conference, no sooner heard of its proceedings, and especially of its circular letters, than he was again roused to combat, "detesting some of the steps that had been taken respecting the sacraments." "May the Lord destroy everything that belongs to despotism wherever it appears," exclaimed the determined innovator.[38] He was, however, busily engaged in a pamphlet fight against horse-races and theaters. It was a hard combat, and diverted him from any serious interference with the Church. An old comedy called "The Hypocrite," was reproduced against him in the Aberdeen Theater, in which he was grotesquely personated. "I went to bed," he says, in characteristic language, "racking all my ingenuity to find out some way to counteract their wickedness and folly." The play came off rather shabbily, but the actors avenged themselves by assailing him through the press. He returned the assault in a printed sermon, and, satisfied with his victory, turned his attention again to the affairs of the Church, but with no important public measure.

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[37] Pawson's MS. Journal, cited in Memoir of Entwisle, chap. 5.

[38] Life, etc., p. 68.

"At present we really have no government," wrote Pawson, the President, toward the latter part of 1793. "It will by no means answer our ends to dispute one with another as to which is the most scriptural form of Church government. We should consider our present circumstances, and endeavor to agree upon some method by which our people may have the ordinances of God, and, at the same time, be preserved from division. I care not a rush whether it be episcopal or presbyterian; I believe neither of them to be purely scriptural; but our preachers and people in general are prejudiced against the latter; consequently, if the former will answer our end we ought to embrace it. Indeed, I be lieve it will suit our present plan far better than the other. The design of Mr. Wesley will weigh much with many, which now evidently appears to have been this: He foresaw that the Methodists would, after his death, soon become a distinct people; he was deeply prejudiced against a presbyterian, and was as much in favor of an episcopal form of government; in order, therefore, to preserve all that was valuable in the Church of England among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke bishops. These, he undoubtedly designed, should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester Conference; but we did not then understand him. I see no way of coming to any good settlement but on the plan I mentioned before. I sincerely wish that Dr. Coke and Mr. Mather may be allowed to be what they are, bishops. We must have ordination among us at any rate."[39] A later Wesleyan authority has declared that "the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church is only a development of Wesley's opinions of Church polity; and it may be added, that an imitation of that great transaction in this country would be perfectly justifiable on the ground assumed by Wesley himself, and held sacred by his followers;" and, again, "if we mistake not, it is to the

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[39] MS. Letter cited by Smith, History, etc., II, 4, 3.

American Methodist Episcopal Church that we are to look for the *real* mind and sentiments of this great man."[40] Pawson evidently entertained this opinion at the present time. Some of the most commanding members of the Conference concurred with him, and received his suggestion as the most likely solution of their formidable difficulties. It probably originated with Coke.[41] Mather, Taylor, Pawson, Bradburn, Rogers, Moore, Adam Clarke, and Coke, met for consultation on the subject at Litchfield, a town in which there were no Methodists, and where they supposed their interview would not be attended with any public excitement. Coke addressed them on the agitated state of the Connection and the perils which menaced it; he referred to the success of Methodism in the New World under its episcopal organization, and the relief which Wesley's establishment of this form of government there had given to a similar controversy. He offered ordination to the brethren who were present. His motive was disinterested, for he already possessed the episcopal office and dignity, conferred by an authority which they all venerated above that of any archbishop of the realm. Most of the meeting approved his proposition; but Moore, who had been ordained by Wesley, very wisely suggested that they should confine their proceedings to the discussion of its practicability, and defer its decision to the next Conference. He, however, pronounced the measure a scriptural and suitable expedient for the government of any Christian Church. Mather concurred with Moore. They adjourned after adopting a series of resolutions which were to be submitted with all their signatures to the Annual Conference. They proposed "an order of superintendents," to be annually chosen "if necessary;" the ordination of the preachers as deacons and elders; the division of the Connection into seven or eight districts, each to be under the care of one of the superintendents who should have power to call in the assistance of the President in any exigency. They all agreed to "recommend and support" this scheme in the Conference as "a thing greatly wanted, and likely to be of much advantage to the work of God."[42]

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[40] Dr. Dixon's "Methodism in its Origin," etc., pp. 221, 248. New York, 1853.

[41] Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1845, p. 314.

This private consultation, so cautiously conducted, did not escape public animadversion. Its very cautiousness excited suspicion. Kilham referred to it as a conspiracy to place pretentious prelates over the people. Such, indeed, was the sensitiveness of the Methodist public mind in its new and precarious circumstances, such the eagerness, and yet fearfulness of parties, that the suggestion of any comprehensive plan for the relief of the Church seemed only to challenge doubt and contention. The public excitement became again intense as the session of the Conference approached. A new element of discord appeared. The conservatives included most of the trustees of chapels, as these were generally chosen from the most wealthy members of the societies, and were therefore most likely to be influenced, by their social position, in favor of the national Church. They were, indeed, the "High-Church" lay aristocracy of Methodism, distinguishable, as such, from the mass of the people who demanded the sacraments, and from the ultra democratic party represented by Kilham.[43] By extensive consultations and correspondence they prepared to exert their influence, if not their official power, against all liberal changes. They met by delegations at Bristol, before the session of the Conference there. They claimed a larger control than had been conceded them over the affairs of the Societies, and particularly the right of a veto on the sacraments in the chapels. They denounced the meeting at Litchfield, demanded that the preachers should abandon all ecclesiastical titles, cease to administer the sacraments, abjure ordinations, and divide more equally with the trustees the administration of the affairs of the Church.

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[42] A copy of the resolutions, bearing the signature of Adam Clarke, has been recovered and published. See Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism, vol. ii, Appendix 9.

[43] Smith, II, 4, 3.

With this new phase of the controversy confronting it, the Conference met in Bristol, June 28, 1794. Thomas Hanby was elected President—a venerable "helper" of Wesley, who had traveled in the ministry nearly forty years, and was eminent for his piety, his quiet spirit, and his courage in any trial. Coke, as usual, was appointed secretary. The two bodies—the Conference and the delegated trustees—immediately opened negotiations. Benson recommended that the "Conference do affirm and ratify the declaration of last year respecting the sacraments." It hesitated; and Mather presented a letter as a suitable reply to the trustees. They answered it, still urging that the sacraments, ordination, and "the burying of the dead be laid aside." The Conference, deputing a committee to consult with them, voted against the Litchfield resolutions, and affirmed that imposition of hands, though good, is not an essential form of ordination, but that the recognized admission to the ministry is a sufficient authorization for both the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments.

The results of the consultation with the trustees were some pacificatory concessions, but no sacrifice of the essential policy of the body. The Conference issued an address, declaring that "as the Lord's Supper has not been administered except where the society has been unanimous, and would not have been contented without it, it is now agreed that the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in future where the union and concord of the society can be preserved without it;" that "the preachers will not perform the office of baptism except for the desirable ends of love and concord, though baptism, as well as the burial of the dead, was performed by many of them before Mr. Wesley's death, and with his consent;" that "the management of the temporal and spiritual concerns of the society shall be separated as far as the purposes of peace and harmony can be answered thereby—the temporal concerns shall be managed by the stewards chosen for that purpose, the spiritual by the preachers, who have *ever* appointed leaders, chosen stewards, admitted and expelled members of society, consulting their brethren the stewards and leaders;" that "the trustees, in conjunction with the assistant preacher, who shall have one vote only, shall choose their own stewards, who shall receive and disburse all seat rents, and such collections as shall be made for the purpose of paying interest for money due upon the society's premises, or for reducing the principal;" that "no trustee, however accused, or defective in conforming to the established rules of the Society, shall be removed from it, unless his crime or breach of the rules be proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders;" that "if any preacher be accused of immorality, a meeting shall be called of all the preachers, trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit in which he labors, for his trial, and, if found guilty he shall be removed from the circuit if a majority of the meeting so demand."

A list of circuits on which the sacraments were to be allowed the ensuing year, was published in the Minutes; they numbered forty-eight, and included many "appoint ments" or preaching places.

Reports were spread of disaffection on the part of the Irish Conference; the English body was relieved from this additional alarm by a cordial Address from their Irish brethren—the first of those annual messages which have ever since continued between them. Dr. Coke was appointed to attend their next session.[44]

The statistical returns showed a successful year. There were 137 circuits.[45] The roll of the Conference contained 389 names; 35 candidates were received on trial, 8 of them in Ireland and 5 in the West Indies; 6 laborers had died since the preceding session; none located; 11 were reported on the Reserve List.

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[44] Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 318.

[45] The Minutes are again inaccurate; they report 138. Smith, I, 5, 1.

The members of the societies amounted to 91,737; of whom 7,846 were in British North America and the West Indies, and 223 in Africa. The increase in the domestic societies was 8,343; the total increase was 8,649.

In America fourteen Annual Conferences were held within the year; eleven circuits were formed, one of them bearing the name of the state of New Hampshire, another that of Vermont. Asbury advanced over the country from South Carolina to New England. Jesse Lee penetrated into the "Province of Maine," and proclaimed the word through the wildernesses of the Penobscot. John Hill entered New Hampshire, and in many other directions did the itinerants extend their course; but the internal agitation, by O'Kelly and his associates, alienated many of the people, and a decrease of 1,035 members was reported in the Minutes. The total number of communicants was 66,608, making, with those of the English Connection, an aggregate of 158,345.

"The Conference of 1794 was," said Atmore, "the most painful one I have attended." In their perplexity the preachers gave way to severe disputations. The concession to the delegated trustees was found to be no solution of their difficulties. It was really a concession to the liberal party: a unanimous demand was necessary, before, for the sacraments; now they were allowed wherever they were deemed necessary to prevent discord. A decisive majority, if not indeed a persistent minority, could therefore command them. The conservative party soon perceived this fact, and again threw the Church into general agitation and confusion. It was "one continual scene of turmoil and strife" down to the Conference of 1795.[46] The first outbreak was unfortunately in the first chapel of Methodism erected by Wesley, at Bristol, the trustees of which were opposed to the introduction of the sacraments and the liberal measures of the late Conference. The administration of the Lord's Supper in their city at the session provoked their hostility. Henry Moore being appointed to their circuit, they served him,

[46] Stamp's Mem. of Atmore, Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 319.

two days after its adjournment, with a legal notice forbidding his appearance in their pulpit. Moore was a cool, determined man, the man for the place in such an exigency; he entered the pulpit, where some trustees had preceded him, and claimed, not the right to preach, but to state the reasons why he surrendered it. Taking the attorney's letter from his pocket, he read it, and added, that if the trustees had the power to prevent him from preaching on their premises, yet they had not the power to restrain him "from administering the Gospel of the grace of God, and therefore he should immediately proceed up the hill to Portland Chapel, where the word of God was not bound." Descending the pulpit, he was followed by most of the congregation; not twenty persons remained with the trustees.

This act of the trustees was a blow at the fundamental plan of Methodism; generally followed, it would have destroyed the itinerant system by subjecting the pulpits to local control. Moore, therefore, resisted it to the utmost. Unhappily his colleagues, Benson, Rodda, and Vasey, were inclined by their conservative opinions to compromise with the trustees, or at least to submit to them and leave the determination of the question to the Conference. Thus were some of the most prominent preachers themselves divided in the same city, unable even to exchange pulpits; Benson, Vasey, and Rodda, occupying the chapels of the trustees; Moore and Crowther, aided by Coke, Clarke, and Rutherford, occupying the new chapel and its dependent appointments. The example presented to the people was most pernicious, and, if not speedily corrected, must prove disastrous. Moore appealed to the District Meeting, all the members of which sustained him except Benson and his two colleagues.[47] The latter were considered by the meeting as having virtually seceded from the Connection by siding with the trustees. The dispute soon involved the whole Methodist community, and pamphlets and printed circulars were scattered "almost from John O'Groat's to Land's

[47] Life of Moore, by Mrs. Smith, (daughter of Adam Clarke,) ann. 1794.

End."[48] It was "a grand crisis of Methodism," says a contemporary writer, "and I have no scruple in saying that the success of Mr. Moore and his friends, was, in one sense, the salvation of the Connection."[49] "We were in danger," says Pawson, "of a general division." As about thirteen hundred members withdrew with Moore, they speedily erected a new chapel. Moore, while resolute for his principles, endeavored to appease the quarrel; he early proposed to Benson that both should retire from the circuit, as a means of reconciliation between the belligerent parties; but Benson declined the suggestion. In February, 1795, Moore, Benson, and Bradburn met at Kingswood, near Bristol, to devise terms of peace. A second meeting for the purpose was held there in April. Coke visited Bristol, and endeavored to reconcile the two preachers at the breakfast table of Benson. They were good though pertinacious men; they at last made mutual concessions, and the outlines of a Plan of Pacification for the whole Connection, written by Thompson, was approved by Benson for the consideration of the ensuing Conference.[50] Mather and Pawson sent letters to the Methodists of Bristol urging reconciliation and peace. Both parties appointed a day of fasting and prayer, and thus approached each other in the best possible way. The conservative trustees subsequently conveyed the title of their church property to the trustees of the new chapel, the latter assuming the debts of the former, and the integrity of Methodism in Bristol was restored.[51]

Kilham was active in this general and lamentable fray. Soon after the Conference of 1794 he issued a pamphlet respecting the Bristol disputes, entitled "Priscilla and

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[48] Alexander Knox, Esq., though a Churchman, entered into the contest, through the press, in favor of the trustees. The most important pamphlets for the history of this controversy are Bradburn's and Benson's Circular Letters; two Tracts by Knox, and Moore's Reply to them; Rhodes's Point Stated; Pawson's Affectionate Address; Crowther's Truth and Matter, and Crisis of Methodism.

[49] Jonathan Crowther: Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 322.

[50] Wes. Mag., 1835, p. 131.

[51] Myles's Chron. Hist., ann. 1794.

Aquila." A later publication, which he signed "Martin Luther," was a graver affair, a severe attack on the conservatives and a general discussion of church polity, with such characteristic reflections on his opponents as were deemed intolerable, notwithstanding the exasperated excitement and language of the times. It was followed by another pamphlet from his restless pen: "An Earnest Address to the Preachers, etc. By Paul and Silas," which he distributed at the ensuing Conference.

After this stormy year the preachers resorted to their next session with intense anxiety, believing that deliverance must be there providentially vouchsafed to them, or their trials culminate in a general explosion of their organization.

The session began at Manchester, July 27, 1795. Joseph Bradford, the traveling companion of Wesley, was chosen President, and Dr. Coke Secretary. Oppressed by the perils which beset it, the Conference devoted its first day to fasting and prayer. It had reached a crisis, and the Divine Providence, which had so long tested it, as in the fire, was about to lead it out of its consuming agitations; not, indeed, suddenly, but surely. Entwisle, who was present, wrote home: that he "never saw so much love among the preachers before." After powerful preliminary sermons on the Sabbath, the Conference met at five o'clock on Monday morning and began their devotions, which were continued till seven; again they assembled at eight, and continued together till ten; at twelve they reassembled and spent two hours in prayer; after which the preachers, by themselves, partook of the Lord's Supper. "It would rejoice your heart," says Entwisle, "to see how all former things are laid aside, and the persons concerned declare that they will not only forgive, but forget former grievances, and never mention them more."[52]

A delegated meeting of trustees was held in Manchester simultaneously with the session; it was an imposing assembly, both by its numbers and the respectability of many of its members. Thomas Thompson of Hull, a man of commanding influence, was their president. Negotiations were immediately opened between the two bodies. On the day following the Conference fast a committee of nine preachers was appointed by ballot to report a Plan of Pacification. Providentially they were as equally divided as possible on the prevailing question. They were Bradford, (President,) Pawson, Mather, Coke, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Moore, and Clarke. "The preachers," says Entwisle, "were all astonished at the choice, and saw that it was of God. Coke, Pawson, Clarke, Bradburn, and Moore, being in favor of the societies having the sacraments from their own preachers, the other four being opposed to it." The committee had long sessions on six successive nights; a conciliatory spirit prevailed, and the plan devised by Thompson was improved and recommended to the Conference, where, after some amendments, it was adopted and offered to the convention of trustees, which proposed some additions that were admitted by the preachers, "when," adds Entwisle, "the whole plan, entitled, 'Articles of Agreement for General Pacification,' was agreed to by all the preachers and a large majority of the trustees."

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[52] Mem. of Entwisle, chap. 6.

Thus was consummated the celebrated Plan of Pacification; it originated in the agitations at Bristol, and though not a final adjustment of the general controversy, it saved the Connection at this juncture and opened the way for its final safety. The effect on the Conference was visible. "We are going on well," wrote Entwisle; again, on the 31st: "I never was at a Conference since Mr. Wesley's death, or before, in which such an excellent spirit was manifested;" and four days later he says: "The business of the Conference goes on charmingly. It is slow, indeed, but sure. The most critical points have been discussed with candor and good temper. 'All things work together for good.' The late agitation of our whole Connection will be overruled for the advantage of the Church of God."

The chief provisions of the new arrangement were: that the sacraments, the burial of the dead, and divine service in "Church hours," must be determined thereafter, in any society, by a majority of its trustees, stewards, and leaders, the consent of the Conference being also necessary; that the Lord's Supper must not be administered in the chapels on Sundays on which it is administered in the national churches; that it must be administered according to the national ritual; that the Liturgy, Wesley's abridgement of it, or at least the lessons appointed by the calendar, must be used wherever, in England, divine service should be performed on Sundays in Church hours; that the appointment of preachers shall remain solely with the Conference, and no exclusion of them from the pulpits by trustees be allowed; and that preachers shall be subject to trial, under accusation, at the instance of a majority of the trustees, or stewards and leaders, before a meeting of the preachers of the district and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, and can be removed from the circuit if found guilty.

The convention of trustees voted thanks to the Conference for these concessions, and adjourned, "hoping that by the blessing of God" the new measures might be "a means of uniting the whole body of Methodists throughout the three kingdoms."

At this session the roll of appointments recorded 391 preachers; 20 were received on trial; 2 ceased to travel; 10 had died since the preceding session. The number of circuits was 138, a gain of but one. The numbers in society amounted to 97,902, the increase of the year to 6,188.

The Church in the United States suffered severely during the year from the O'Kelly schism; its returns of members amounted to 60,291, showing a loss of 6,317—more than the aggregate gains of Methodism in all its other fields. It had been, in fine, a dark year of trial to the denomination everywhere—of disputation, perplexity, and fear, but also of salutary discipline for the future. Meanwhile the means of its final deliverance were preparing. By a few more struggles it was to extricate itself from its menacing embarrassments, and to find at last that the good hand of God had conducted it through these protracted trials for its own invigoration and the settlement and security of its effective polity. If Benson had erred at Bristol, he was a peacemaker at the Conference, and deserves commemoration as the chief advocate of the Plan of Pacification. While at this session he wrote: "The prayers of so many cannot fall to the ground. O my God! I bless thee for the spirit I have felt ever since we met. Thou rememberest how I sought thee in secret and in great distress. O bless me always with this precious spirit!" Still later in the session he says: "Surely I feel the blessing of being a peace-maker. Conference ended. All well. Eternal glory be unto thee, O God!" He preached an eloquent sermon before the Conference on "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and uttered such woes on the promoters of disunion as were pronounced "most awful."[53] Bradburn pleaded also with his overwhelming eloquence for harmony and their common cause, on Judges xiii, 23: "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these."

The measures of the session of 1795 had a tranquilizing effect on portions of the Church, especially on the late center of the strife, the Bristol societies. Benson and Moore now exchanged pulpits there, and though all difficulties were not extinguished, comparative harmony and efficiency returned. Disputation, however, continued to prevail in many places on the sacramental question, and a serious schism took place at Halifax, the fourth society of the Connection in numerical importance; most of the seceders, however, returned to their brethren. Kilham's active spirit could not rest under the partial concessions made by the Conference, and before the year closed he published another pamphlet entitled, "Progress of Liberty among the People called Methodists." It presented "an outline of a constitution" for the Connection, and unlike his former publications, bore his real name. It was terribly severe on his brethren of the Conference, and its principles would have radically revolutionized their government. Adam Clarke, Dr. Coke, Richard Reece, and other preachers at London, demanded of its author's circuit superintendent at Newcastle, that Kilham should be brought to trial for its publication. Kilham answered this letter in a printed reply, stigmatizing it as "The Methodistic Bull." It was agreed to defer his arrest till the next Conference; the intense excitement of the country, occasioned by the French Revolution, the political principles of which were now rife in most of the land, would have embarrassed any proceeding of the kind; it could hardly fail to be misconstrued, and the utmost deliberation and forbearance were necessary. The preachers were suspected by some of prejudice against the liberties of the people, by others of disloyalty to the crown. They were vilified by pictorial caricatures and political pamphlets. Oppressed with internal perplexities and external hostilities, their trials seemed at times insupportable, and the profoundest prudence, energy, and sincerity were necessary for the salvation of their cause.

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[53] Life by Treffry, chap. 7. Mem. of Entwisle, chap. 6.

They assembled again in their annual Conference in London, July 25th, 1796. Thomas Taylor, whose long services and ministerial heroism have already been narrated, was appointed president, and Dr. Coke secretary. Benson preached before most of the preachers at City Road Chapel on the Sunday before the session, a discourse of transcendent power from the words, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Its effect is said to have "exceeded description." In the course of the sermon he showed that the word rendered ministers in the text, literally signifies *under-rowers.* "Such," he said, "are the ministers of the Gospel. They are *under-rowers* in that vessel of which Christ is the pilot, or rather the captain. Of late some have thought that our *rowers* have brought us into deep waters, where we shall have much difficulty to avoid being overset, especially as our ship, they say, grows *leaky*, and takes water fast. Be this as it will; it is well that the Lord Jesus beholds us, as from the mountain he beheld the disciples on the lake, when the sea was rough and the wind boisterous, and they toiled in rowing! It is well that he prays for us as he did for them. May he also come to us walking on the water, especially as it is now past the fourth watch of the night, (so to speak,) and some begin to despair of our being able to hold out much longer, having already spent four dark and troublesome years since we lost our *head-rower*.[54]

Bradburn also preached on the same day; Entwisle says: "His text was Isaiah xii, 6. He proved indeed that God is with us, that the holy one of Israel is great in the midst of us, and that we have just cause to cry out and shout. It has been a good day, glory be to God."

The most important event of the session was the trial of Kilham. Many of the preachers had sympathized with his views; such men as Taylor, the present President, and Bradburn, and Crowther, had favorably corresponded with him, but they abandoned him in his late extreme measures.[55] On the first day Mather rose and asked, "Is Mr. Alexander Kilham here?" The reply being in the affirmative, he resumed: "Before we proceed to business I wish, by permission of the President, to put a few questions to Mr. Kilham." The request being granted, Mather asked him, "How long is it since you were received into full connection." "Eleven years." "Who received you?" "Mr. Wesley." "Did he not at the same time give you a copy of the large *Minutes* with these words written on them, and signed by himself, 'As long as you walk by these rules we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer?" "He did so." "Do you retract that agreement, or covenant?" "I desire time to consider that question."

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[54] Treffry's Life of Benson, chap. 7.

[55] He speaks of them as recreants, and his biographer inserts their letters in an appendix. Life of Kilham, pp. 79–81, and 183–218

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This was unanimously conceded, and he retired till the following morning, when he delivered a paper repeating the charges contained in his pamphlets, but not replying to the charges brought against him by the Conference, nor answering Mather's question. The latter charges had been handed to him personally by Adam Clarke. Before his paper was read, it was unanimously agreed, "That the Conference confirm the engagement entered into at Manchester, in 1791, namely, to abide by the plan Mr. Wesley had left, and the rules contained in the large *Minutes*, both with respect to doctrine and discipline." Kilham voted for this pledge.

He was then asked if he fully concurred with them respecting the rules of the Minutes; he replied, "I agree to them as far as they are agreeable with Scripture;" to which vague answer Moore rejoined: "We all agree with the Koran of Mohammed with the same limitation, namely, as far as it is agreeable to Scripture; but we agree to these rules because we believe them to *be* agreeable with Scripture." Kilham offered no reply. The secretary, Dr. Coke, then cited passages from Kilham's various publications, as charges which he made against the preachers and the Church government; respecting the former he gave vague answers, and to the latter he raised objections in accordance with his own more liberal political sentiments: after long discussion he was desired to withdraw, and the Conference, having considered the case, ordered "That any letters sent in Mr. Kilham's favor should be read, but that no letters against him, in reference to the new rules or plans which he desired to introduce, should be read."

The charges of the pamphlets against the preachers were then read over, and pronounced "unproved and slanderous." It was voted that, "Whereas, Mr. Kilham has brought several charges against Mr. Wesley and the body of the preachers, of a slanderous and criminal nature, which charges he declared he could prove, and which upon examination he could not prove even one of them; and also considering the disunion and strife which he has occasioned in many of the societies, we adjudge him unworthy of being a member of the Methodist Connection." This decision was unanimous.[56]

They accused him of defaming the Church by alleging that many of the local and traveling preachers were unfit for their ministerial work; that the Conference was guilty of tyranny; that it was guilty of immorality in receiving preachers for selfish motives, in having only mock examinations of character, and in wasting the public moneys of the Connection; that it was "guilty of swindling" and of maintaining a criminal secrecy in the transactions of its business; he was further charged with defaming Wesley's character, and with using "indecent and slanderous language." Formidable citations in proof of these specifications were made from his "Progress of Liberty," "Methodistic Bull," and "Appeal."[57] The Conference addressed to the societies a "Circular," giving a statement of the trial.

Kilham sent a letter to the President in about a week after his deposition, protesting his regard for the Connection, affirming that if he had erroneous views he would willingly submit to its counsels, and adding that "it is probable that before another Conference our views on these subjects will be the same."[58] The letter was supposed by the Conference to show an inclination to return and conform to its wishes. Mather, Pawson, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Bradford, and Moore, as respectable a committee as the body could well appoint, were sent to ascertain his disposition. He refused to sanction the Plan of Pacification, and the Conference finally voted that "he could have no place in the Connection while he continued in his present opinions."

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[56] Letter of Henry Moore, Life, page 144.

[57] Minutes of the Examination of Mr. Alexander Kilham before the General Conference in London, on the 26th, 27th, and 28th of July, 1795. 12mo., pp. 16.

[58] Smith's History of Methodism, II, 4, 2.

This decisive proceeding showed that, notwithstanding their overwhelming embarrassments, the preachers were determined not to compromise the discipline or character of the Church.

Kilham soon after began the formation of the "Methodist New Connection."

The Conference virtually reaffirmed the Plan of Pacification, enjoining that the Lord's Supper should be administered wherever it had been allowed, but only to members of the society. Under the prudent provisions of the "Plan," the adoption of the sacraments soon became general in the societies.

The roll of appointments recorded this year 390 preachers; 3 had died since the last session; 22 were admitted on trial; 6 ceased to travel, including Kilham. The circuits numbered 143. The returns of members amounted to 104,879; the increase to 6,977.

In the United States of America a declension was again reported; the members of society amounted to 56,664, showing a decrease of 3,627. During three years the agitations of the O'Kelly secession had thus impeded the progress of the denomination. As the American General Conference was to meet this year, Coke left the Wesleyan body in session, in order to be present with his transatlantic brethren on this important occasion; he bore with him an address from the former to the latter, which was the first example of that interchange of letters which has ever since been maintained between the two bodies.[59]

The session was considered an unusually good one. Entwisle, who was so content with the two preceding Conferences, wrote: "This has been the best Conference I ever attended. The preachers are united as one man. I verily believe that Mr. Kilham's conduct has eventually done the preachers much good; the leading men appear to be divested of their mutual jealousies, and we have a prospect of peace and prosperity." Wearied, if not exhausted, by the long conflict, the preachers dispersed again to their circuits. The Connection still bowed despondingly, clinging to hope; but it was the hope deferred, that "maketh the heart sick." Throughout the ranks of the laity and the ministry, however, there were men of strong faith, who saw the divine hand in these prolonged trials, and waited patiently to "see the salvation of God;" confident that their cause would yet come out of the dark storm, with its flag unrent and its sails still spread, to pass onward triumphantly from generation to generation, in what they persisted in believing to be its predestined and beneficent course.

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[59] A brief letter relating to the schismatic conduct of William Hammet, in Charleston, S. C., had been sent by the Wesleyan Conference to Asbury and the American preachers, in 1792. Myles's Chron. Hist., chap. 8.

If the struggle reached its crisis in the Pacification measures of 1795, it seemed, nevertheless, still far from its termination. Renewed agitation met the returning itinerants almost everywhere as they resumed their labors. The nation was swaying to and fro with political excitement. The French influence had by this time spread debating societies and revolutionary clubs over most of it; the works of Paine were read and discussed in these excited assemblies; in some places Methodist laymen attended them,[60] and the new Methodist pamphlet literature could not escape their discussions, especially now that Kilham had been expelled, and was abroad pleading for what he deemed the emancipation of the Wesleyan laity. Wherever there were sufficient disaffected members in a society to procure for him access to its chapel he proclaimed his supposed wrongs. The Dissenters opened their houses of worship for him, where the Wesleyans shut him out. He was a man of tireless energy, and the reawakened agitation spread generally. Benson and Mather zealously labored to induce the Methodists to preclude him from their pulpits. In some instances the societies were divided into hostile parties respecting his reception, the trustees usually refusing him the chapels, many of the people demanding them for him, one or the other party claiming the keys, or even removing the locks, or breaking open the doors or windows.[61] He again resorted to the press, publishing an account of his trial, and appealing to the people against the Conference. He established at Leeds, the headquarters of Methodism in Yorkshire, a periodical organ called The Monitor. He believed himself right, a victim of persecution, and his zeal was kindled by this conviction. "My mind was supported," he wrote, "in the midst of the difficulties I had to pass through; the Lord was truly my defense in the time of trouble; may glory be ascribed to him forever!" In the midst of his struggles his wife, whom he seems to have loved with the ardor usual to such sanguine temperaments, died a blessed death, many of her Methodist sisters attending her and watching with her in her sufferings to the last. He preached three times on the day of her interment, and went forth with unabated energy, traversing the country and preparing the way for a new Methodist organization. A hundred and sixty-seven Leaders and other Wesleyans of Leeds, adopted his opinions, and issued an "Address," advocating them. "Leeds," says a witness of these strifes, "is in a flame of contention. Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester are in a distracted state. At Barnsby they used to meet to discuss politics, now they meet to discuss Methodist politics. There is a great appearance of disunion in the body now. How these things will terminate God only knows. We are like chaos. But he can bring order out of confusion."[62] The pious Entwisle desponded under the increasing violence of the storm. Alluding to a division on Huddersfield circuit, he wrote: "The spirit of suspicion and jealousy seems to gain ground; and many appear as if nothing would satisfy them but an entire overturning of our system of government. What the end of these things will be it is impossible to say. I am at a loss what judgment to form of the aspect of the present commotions in our Connection. God has permitted these evils to come upon us either to purify or scourge us. A sense of my own unprofitableness as a member of the community would induce me to view them in the light of judgments and scourges; but a view of God's mercy and of the great revivals of religion in many places, leads me to hope better things. O Lord, correct us, but not in anger, lest we be consumed. Whatever may happen, every Christian should endeavor to keep his own heart in a pious frame. Men's hearts were never more in danger than now. Such is human nature, that it is difficult for us to differ in our opinions and love as brethren. Most likely a division of our body will take place ere long. Then will follow, very probably, inflammatory publications, mutual animosities, and rancor. If we cannot agree upon the same outward rules, O that we might agree to love each other, and to let contentions cease. The Canaanite is in the land. Deists laugh at us and at Christianity, and the cause of infidelity is strengthened by our contentions. I do not mean to reflect on either party. My heart bleeds for the suffering cause of religion. I lament the excessive zeal of some on both sides. And now my chief care shall be to keep my own heart free from the impure influence of party spirit; and O may God make me a lover of peace and a lover of good men."[63]

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[60] Smith's History of Methodism, II, 5, 2.

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[61] Kilham's Life, pp. 122–129.

[62] Smith's History of Methodism, II, 5, 2.

Many of the trustees of the Connection were still dissatisfied with its government. A week before the next Conference sixty-seven delegates from them met at Leeds to make further demands.[64] The Conference itself assembled there, according to appointment, on the first of August, 1797, the trustees being still in session. Never, says a historian of Methodism, had the Methodist preachers entered upon the work of their annual assembly under circumstances of so much difficulty and danger to the Connection.[65] Dr.

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[63] Memoirs, chap. 7.

[64] Smith. The author of Moore's Mem., p. 157, says the number was 200, "sent from all parts of the kingdom;" other Methodist authorities also give the latter number.

[65] Smith, II, 5, 2.

Coke was chosen President, and Samuel Bradburn Secretary. The Minutes enrolled 399 preachers; 23 were received on probation; 3 ceased to travel; 3 had died since the previous session. The circuits numbered 145, being a gain of two. The British Islands reported 99,519 members of society; their increase was 4,293; the British North American Provinces and the West Indies reported 8,742, showing a decrease of 911. The total membership under the jurisdiction of the Conference was 108,261; the total increase was 3,382.

After successive years of decrease the Church in the United States of America now reported a gain, its members amounting to 58,663, its increase to 1,999—making the aggregate number of Methodists in both hemispheres 166,924, the aggregate increase 5,381. Notwithstanding, then, the profound agitations of the Connection and the apprehensions of the Conference, Methodism was found, at this session, to be still progressive in most of its territories. The assembled evangelists took courage, not, however, to resist heedlessly the popular demands, but to meet them with all safe concessions, that they might relieve their cause of its remaining dangers, and proceed without embarrassment in their great spiritual mission. Pawson had prepared during the year a revised copy of the Large Minutes which Wesley had established as the Discipline of the Church, including new regulations that had been adopted since Wesley's last edition, and omitting obsolete rules. It presented, in this form, a thorough and simplified code of laws, and was much needed by the societies in their present excitement and confusion. It was adopted after careful examination, and signed by every member of the Conference who was present except two, who withdrew to join Kilham's party.[66] The junior preachers had been represented as disaffected toward the policy of their senior brethren; ninety-seven of them met and signed a paper correcting the report, and declaring "that, instead of considering our senior brethren in the light of 'tyrants and oppressors,' we feel ourselves under great obligations to them for their extraordinary labor and fatigue in the service of the Conference. We are satisfied that their piety, abilities, faithfulness, diligence, usefulness, and long continuance in the work of the ministry entitle them to the respect and esteem of the whole Connection; and though we are taught by our Saviour to 'call no man master upon earth,' yet, regarding them as our fathers, we conceive it our duty to hear them speak in our Conferences, with that deference which is due to their age and character, especially as we are persuaded they have greatly contributed to keep the body one in the Lord. We should think it an honor to wash their feet; and our desire and prayer is, to follow them as they have followed Christ." It being reported that they had signed this document by a species of coercion, they declared in another paper that "every man was left entirely to his own choice. The junior brethren met by themselves, spoke freely and largely upon the subject, drew up, unanimously agreed to, and cheerfully signed the Declaration, as a *free-will offering* in vindication of the reputation of those who deserve so well of the Methodist Connection."

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[66] Minutes, sub ann., vol i.

The most critical part of the business of the session related to the demands of the assembled trustees; it was conducted during nine or ten days with as much cordiality as dignity, by written communications and committees from both bodies, and the final agreements were so satisfactory to both that the convention of trustees adjourned, declaring by formal resolution its thanks to the Conference, and the determination of the delegates to "support the Methodist cause on the plan agreed on by the Conference;" and the Conference voted that "we do sincerely return you our thanks for your candid and Christianlike conduct throughout the whole of your proceedings in the character of representatives of the trustees. We join our hands and hearts with yours, and trust we shall all of us continue faithful till death in the good old cause, which many of you and us have so long been engaged in, and in which we are determined to spend our strength and lives. To God's holy keeping we recommend you." Thus did the tossed and driven bark come forth from the protracted storm. "The division of the body," says a Methodist authority, "which enemies to its prosperity, both within and without, ardently desired, was entirely averted; and preachers and people, released from vexatious and unprofitable wrangling, were able to pursue their true and proper calling of building up believers, and spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land."[67] The result of the struggle was most salutary, not only in the restoration of harmony, but, if possible, more so, as giving a consolidated government to Wesleyan Methodism, by which it has not only survived later strifes, but has extended its sway with increasing energy, more or less, around the world, and which in our day, after more than half a century of labors and struggles, remains as effective a system of church polity as Protestant Christendom affords. The fact that it is due as much to the moderation and concessive spirit, as to the firmness of the good and great men who conducted Methodism through this formidable struggle, presents a lesson which should never be forgotten by their successors.

The adjustment of 1797 was essentially the completion of the Plan of Pacification of 1795. The combined results of both were: that the supremacy of the Conference, as designed by Wesley—its right to appoint the preachers to circuits, and its control of the pulpits of the Church—was maintained; a majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders of any circuit having, however, power to demand a meeting of the preachers and other officers of the circuit to examine a preacher whose disqualifications might render him unfit for the appointment, he being subject to removal if a majority of the meeting should condemn him, and subject to suspension till the next Conference, if he should refuse to submit to their decision. The sacraments were accorded with restrictions which could not finally prevent their general administration. The Conference pledged itself to publish annual accounts of the yearly collections. All accounts of deficits in the allowance of preachers, which the circuits did not meet, were to be presented in the Circuit Quarterly Meetings, and be indorsed by the circuit stewards; these claims having been heretofore reported by the preacher only to the District Meetings, which were composed of preachers, and were often at a distance from the local Quarterly Meetings. The District Meetings were allowed to decide no other temporal business without the consent of the Quarterly Meetings of the District. No person was to be admitted to the society by the preacher or otherwise if the Leaders' Meeting had declared the candidate inadmissible, and no member be expelled unless the charges against him were proved before the Leaders' Meeting. A steward or leader could not be appointed or displaced against the will of the Leaders' Meeting. No local preacher could be placed upon the plan of local preachers' appointments without the consent of the local preachers' meeting. If at any time the Conference should deem it proper to enact any new rule for the societies, and such rule should be objected to in the first Quarterly Meeting in any circuit, and if the majority of the meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion that the enforcement of the rule would be injurious to the prosperity of the circuit, it need not be enforced before the next Conference; nevertheless the Quarterly Meetings, refusing a new rule, should not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make it a cause of contention, but must strive by every means to preserve the peace of the Connection.

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[67] Smith, II, 4, 3.

These proceedings, with others of 1792 and 1793, modified much the District Meeting, but still left it an important part of the Wesleyan government. At the next Conference after the death of Wesley, this meeting, summoned by the preacher in charge, was authorized to decide "any critical case," its decision being final till the next Conference.[68] The new regulations only qualified its powers, leaving it as the effective administrative body within its own territory during the interims of the Conference sessions.[69]

It is not surprising that some of the preachers feared the result of these important concessions. Henry Moore, the friend and counselor of Wesley, opposed them as sapping the ecclesiastical foundations of Methodism, and was strongly tempted to retire from it in despair.[70] The Conference, in addressing the Societies respecting its new regulations, said expressly: "Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings." A proposition was made to fortify the executive power of the Conference after these great modifications. Coke, Mather, and Moore, spoke strongly in favor of what they called Wesley's plan, which was to appoint twelve ministers or bishops, two of whom should be in Scotland, three in Ireland, and seven in England.[71] The suggestion was promptly resisted.

The changes admitted were purely ecclesiastical; they touched not directly the moral discipline of Methodism. The Conference sent an Address to the American General Conference, in which it said: "Our Conference has been wonderfully overshadowed by the Spirit of God. We have renewed our covenant with the Lord, and have solemnly signed our rules of doctrine and discipline, declaring our approbation of them, and engaging, in the presence of God, to hold them fast with an inviolable attachment, and to fulfill them with zeal." "Divine love is the grand central point of our union. We at least flatter ourselves that there are no people in the whole world who are more influenced by the spirit of love than the Methodists in Europe and America. Then, rapid as are the strides of infidelity, if we continue *one* the world will fall before us through the power of Almighty God."

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[68] Minutes of 1791.

[69] Beecham's Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism, p. 24. See also an able essay on "The Principles of Wesleyan Methodism ascertained by Historical Analysis, etc., by Rev. J. H. Rigg," ch. 4. The extensive bibliography of Wesleyan Methodism comprises several elaborate works of this class, among which should be named Turner's "Constitution and Discipline of Wesleyan Methodism;" Warren's "Digest of the Laws of Methodism;" and Grindrod's "Compendium of the Laws and Regulations of Wesleyan Methodism."

[70] Moore's Life, p. 164.

[71] Stamp's Mem. of Atmore, Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 439, in which will be found a somewhat minute account of this important session.

Thus hopefully did Methodism struggle forth from the trials which followed the death of Wesley. The secession under Kilham immediately ensued, bearing away about five thousand members, but the Connection became internally and generally tranquilized. During all these agitations its spiritual work was vigorously maintained, and facts, but little noticed amid the raging storm, were occurring in various parts of the great field which were to bud and blossom into the rich harvests of the future. Let us turn, then, from these dry statistics and bitter disputes, and look back upon the more grateful events of these memorable seven years of affliction.

CHAPTER III.

ACCESSIONS TO THE ITINERANT MINISTRY—DEATHS OF EMINENT METHODISTS.

Continued Success of Methodism — Statistical Growth — New Chapels — Richard Treffry — James Townley — Richard Watson — His Character and Labors — His Eloquence and Writings — Other eminent Laborers — Death of Duncan Wright — Of Joseph Cownley — Of John Valton — Thomas Hanby — His early Rencounters with Mobs — His Death — Captain Webb — His Preaching — His Death — Hester Ann Rogers — Her eminent Piety — Her Death.

Throughout the seven years of controversy which followed Wesley's death, the spiritual life and internal energy of the Connection were not seriously impaired. There were periods of declension, but they were transient. Most of the Itinerant Evangelists, while mourning the trials of their cause, took no active part in the prevailing agitations, but pursued their appropriate work with unabated vigor, and rejoiced in the continuance of their former success. The leading men of the ministry, compelled to mingle in the strife, did so only at intervals, and habitually and powerfully prosecuted their evangelical labors. Methodism spread into many new fields, its foreign plans extended, new laborers of extraordinary capacity, and destined to be its ablest champions in the approaching century, were obscurely entering its field; many of those examples of moral heroism and romance, in humble life, which had hitherto characterized its history, were occurring amid its perils, and frequent "revivals" were recruiting its numerical strength.

In the interval between Wesley's death and the conclusion of the controversy, the number of members, in the societies of the Connection, advanced from 76,968 to 108,261 showing a gain of 31,293. The itinerant ministry increased from 313 to 399, presenting a gain of 86, notwithstanding about 76 either ceased to travel or died at their posts.[1] In the same time about 250 new chapels were erected.[2]

Among the host of itinerants who entered the field in this stormy period was Richard Treffry, who was born at St. Austle, Cornwall, November 25, 1771. He joined the Methodists in his sixteenth year, and in his twenty-first entered the Conference as a probationer. With a sound, though not brilliant intellect, and assiduous habits of study, he became recognized as a superior man among his brethren. He contributed several valuable works to their literature, among others their standard Life of Benson and a memoir of his own son, Richard Treffry, whose early death was mourned by the Church as the loss of one of its brightest hopes. The elder Treffry was an able theologian. His preaching was instructive and impressive. "He was a man of prayer," said his brethren at his death, "blending powerful and earnest appeals to God with energetic and forcible expostulations with sinners." His manners, apparently austere to strangers, are described as gentle, and even delicate, to those who knew him intimately. His thoughts were often marked by originality. His opinions were stated with blunt honesty, for he disdained all artifice. For nearly half a century he labored faithfully in the ministry, occupying some of the most important circuits. He was honored with an election to the presidency of the Conference, and also to the House Governorship of one of the Wesleyan Theological Institutions. In his last years he suffered much from bodily infirmities. A few months before his death, when seventy-one years old, he wrote: "Thank God I creep about the house, that is all. I have little acute pain; my sufferings are very tolerable;

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[1] Estimated from Myles's Alphabetic List, Chron. Hist., chap. 12.

[2] Besides other places of worship which were not exclusively devoted to religious use. The estimate is made from Myles's List. arranged according to counties, chap. 13.

but the restlessness and weariness I feel are not so easily borne. I begin now to languish and to sigh after that better country, 'the house of my Father and God,' whither the Forerunner is already entered, and entered for me, to plead my cause and intercede on my behalf. O what deep and unfeigned gratitude animates my breast for a good hope through grace that I shall live forever! I have no merit; I mention no righteousness of my own. The labors of my own life are all laid aside; I value them not. I am a sinner, but Christ is my Saviour, and no other do I need." On the morning of the day on which he died he said to a brother itinerant, who asked him what message he should take to his brethren, about to assemble at the District Meeting: "Tell them my trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in him is everlasting life."[3] "If you feel Jesus to be very precious press my hand," said a member of his family when he was expiring and unable to speak; he respond instantly by an earnest grasp, and, with an upward look full of joyous expression, closed his eyes and was at rest.[4]

James Townley was received on trial by the Conference of 1796. He had been educated liberally by Rev. David Simpson, author of the "Plea for Religion." His mature mind, sympathetic heart, and pastoral fidelity early won for him general regard in the Connection. By diligent study he mastered several languages, and became noted as a Biblical scholar. His writings[5] procured literary credit for his Church, and the title of Doctor of Divinity for him self. He was the first example of that title in the Wesleyan ministry. During five years he labored indefatigably as one of the Wesleyan General Missionary Secretaries. He was elected President of the Conference, and by his devotion to the duties of that office undermined his health.

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[3] Minutes of the Conf., 1843, p. 11. London.

[4] Wes. Meth. Mag., 1842, p. 871.

[5] "Illustrations of Biblical Literature," 3 vols. 8vo.; "Biblical Anecdotes," 1 vol. 12mo.; "Ancient and Modern Missions," Meth. Mag., 1834.

After thirty-six years of service in the itinerant ministry he was compelled at last to seek relief in retirement; but his zeal for missions led him to attempt a sermon, in their behalf, of such energy as prostrated his enfeebled constitution. He suffered intensely, says his biographer;[6] "night after night he closed not his eyes, nor was he able to lie in one position for two minutes together, so great was his agony." His cries of pain pierced the hearts of all who were within hearing, but he murmured not against his terrible trial. "Lord, help me! I am thy child! take me to thyself!" "I long for the rest of the people of God, the rest that remains for me!"—such were his utterances as he passed through the fiery ordeal. His example as a student, as well as an evangelist, was salutary to his younger ministerial brethren, and he ranks honorably among the able men—Benson, Clarke, Watson, and others—who have elevated the rank of Biblical learning in the body.

Richard Watson, a young man, who was to be pre-eminent above all the lay-preachers hitherto received by the Conference, was first recorded on its roll in 1796, the time of the climax of its agitations. Morally great in character, brilliant and profound in intellect, successful in the most important labors of the Church through a ministerial life of thirty-seven years, his brethren were to deplore his death, at last, as "one of the most painful bereavements which any Christian Church ever suffered,"[7] and to bear testimony that "to his understanding belonged a capacity which the greatness of a subject could not exceed, a strength and clearness which the number and complexity of its parts could not confuse, and a vigor which the difficulty and length of an inquiry could not weary."

He was to become one of the greatest preachers of his age, combining the comprehensiveness of the philosopher with the brilliancy of the poet; one of the most commanding legislators of his Church, whose judgment was to be recognized as little short of infallible; its greatest theological writer, whose works were to be its text-books wherever it extended; and an eloquent advocate and a chief manager of its missions, directing their foreign operations, defending them by his pen, and commanding for them the respect and patronage of the British people.

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[6] Meth. Mag. 1834, p. 79.

[7] Minutes of 1833, p. 228.

He was born at Boston-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire, in 1781, and was, therefore, but about sixteen years old when he entered the ministry. He was remarkable in childhood for the precocity of his faculties and the ease with which he acquired his lessons. As usual in such cases, the penalty of his mental superiority was physical feebleness, from which he suffered during his entire life, being seldom exempt from pain, and appealing, by the appearance of his wasted frame, to the sympathies of the admiring audiences who were struck with wonder at the contrasted and majestic strength of his intellect.

His education included the elements of the classic languages, but he afterward mastered them and acquired a comprehensive knowledge of literature and the sciences. He was early interested in the Calvinistic metaphysics, and an attempt to prepare himself to discuss, with a neighbor, "the quinquarticular controversy," induced him to hear a Methodist preacher, whose Arminianism, he supposed, might afford him some arguments. But the itinerant dealt not in such irrelevancies in the pulpit. The discourse awakened the conscience of the young listener. "His life appeared as a dream, eternity, with all its realities, seemed just at hand, and he in danger of perishing everlastingly."[8] He returned home to pray. After days of anguish he received the peace of God "which passeth all understanding." He never forgot this hour of his regeneration. On his dying bed he exclaimed to a friend, "What a light was that! what a day when God's blessed Spirit first struck the light of heaven into our dark minds!" Thirty years after that date, on a visit, as Missionary Secretary, to Lincoln, he stood up, amid a weeping throng, and with "the tears gushing from his eyes" related the particulars of the change which he had there experienced, and which had directed all his subsequent life.

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[8] Jackson's Life of Rev. Richard Watson, chap. 1.

His conversion excited general interest in the town. Persecutors became more violent in opposing the Methodists, who were insulted in their worship and on their way to the chapel. But the young disciple was steadfast; he applied himself to study, his faculties and his religious character matured rapidly, and he soon began to "exhort" in the chapel prayer-meetings. On the day after he was fifteen years old he preached his first sermon in a cottage at Boothby. He was immediately employed, with a number of his brethren, in preaching in the open air or in private houses throughout the neighboring regions. The trials of the early Methodist itinerants were not yet entirely over, and young Watson often retired to his home at night bearing on his soiled and torn raiment marks of the violence of the mob. A Methodist shoemaker, who had been the object of his satire before his conversion, was his courageous companion in these adventures, standing by him and defending him among the rioters. They went forth preaching and praying among the neglected rustics, and "the spiritual and moral good they effected in a comparatively short space was incalculable." Watson was soon called upon to preach in the Methodist pulpit in Lincoln. A sermon delivered by him at Newark having produced a deep impression, he was at last invited to take the place of a disabled preacher on that circuit, whence he was recommended, the same year, to the Conference, the youngest candidate ever received by it. He appeared, however, a mature young man, tall, intellectual, and grave.

On his next circuit his preaching commanded quickly the public attention. "I was truly astonished," said one of his first hearers there; "from that day to this I do not believe that I have ever heard the salvation of the Gospel, in its fullness and spirituality, more clearly set forth or more impressively urged." His youthful modesty sometimes embarrassed him, however, and when about half through one of his discourses he was compelled to stop short and conclude the service, having lost the recollection of his subject.[9]

During the first years of his ministry he suffered much from his feeble health, but prosecuted his studies diligently, especially in the Greek and Hebrew languages, preaching meantime nearly every day, making long and bleak journeys, and enduring the hard fare of his poor societies. The companionship of his ministerial brethren in such trials gave him courage. He found them heroes, and emulated their endurance and success. He delighted to hear them preach, and discovered among them eloquence and other talents which he seldom met elsewhere. He walked twenty miles to hear Bradburn. "I am not," he said years afterward, "a very excitable subject, but Mr. Bradburn's preaching affected my whole frame. I felt the thrill to the very extremity of my fingers, and my hair actually seemed to stand on end."

In the midst of his usefulness, and after having traveled about five years, his career was suddenly arrested by imputations of heresy. The report was false; it was ungenerously repeated and spread; but his own conduct respecting it was imprudent. He abruptly retired from the circuit and resigned his office as a traveling preacher. He endeavored to establish himself in secular business, but "nothing prospered in his hands." His father-in-law was a local preacher in the Methodist New Connection, which had been established by Alexander Kilham; troubled in conscience by the course he had pursued, young Watson was induced to become a local preacher in the new sect, and afterward entered its traveling ministry. His labors were highly appreciated among them, but his health suffered by bleeding at the lungs, and he resorted again to secular employments. He subsequently joined a Wesleyan class, and in 1812 was again welcomed to membership among his former associates of the Wesleyan Conference, deeply regretting the youthful precipitancy with which he had left them. Thenceforward his career was determined; no man better appreciated the mission of Methodism, none more fully consecrated his powers to its promotion. He especially became eminent as the representive of its foreign missionary enterprise. At the death of Coke this great interest required thorough reorganization. Watson, by his splendid eloquence in the pulpit and on the platform, and by his counsels in the Conference and in committees, was one of the chief men who conducted it through this crisis, and founded its present effective scheme. An epoch in his life was his call, in 1816, to plead for this cause in the metropolis. He preached in City Road Chapel; he paced its vestry before the service in deep agitation, oppressed by the burden of his theme, and the sense of his inadequacy to represent it justly. On ascending the pulpit he announced for his text, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." "It is scarcely possible," says his biographer "to conceive of augumentation more lucid and powerful, sentiments more sublime and impressive, imagery more beautiful and varied, and diction more rich and appropriate than those which characterized this wonderful discourse. As he overcame his embarrassment and entered into the subject, his own heart became deeply impressed with its truth and momentous results, his countenance expanded, and the effect upon the congregation was irresistible."

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[9] He never entirely surmounted his diffidence. On one occasion he was so much embarrassed as to pronounce the Benediction at the close of the introductory prayer. On another he could not recall the place where his text was to be found, and repeated it several times, unable to give chapter and verse. Perhaps, however, the absence of mind, which is not uncommon with men of his mental habits, may account for these facts.

The next Conference appointed him to London, where he also became one of the missionary secretaries; in 1821 he was made resident secretary, and thenceforward that great cause was the chief interest of his life. His annual reports, his speeches in many parts of the kingdom, his correspondence with the missionaries, and his occasional publications in its defense, gave it an importance which commanded for it the public confidence, and animated all its operations at home and abroad. At the beginning of his connection with it, its annual receipts were short of £7,000; he saw them raised to £50,000, and he, as much, perhaps, as any other one man, gave them that impulse by which, in our day, they have reached the munificent sum of £140,000; its missionaries were about sixty, he saw them at last multiplied to more than one hundred; the mission stations comprised fifteen thousand communicants, he saw them increased to nearly forty-four thousand. He saw the cause extend to South Africa, India, New South Wales, the Tonga Islands, and so thoroughly established abroad, and influential at home, as to promise to encompass, sooner or later, the whole heathen world.

Meanwhile he pursued his ordinary pulpit labors with increasing ability. A certain loftiness and vastness of thought, marked by the severest taste and by a solemn dignity, characterized his sermons. "He touched everything with the hand of a master. Persons of the highest rank, for intellectual power, in listening to his discourses have rejoiced to feel and own the deep and powerful sway which he exerted over them, while the poor and the unlettered hung with absorbed attention on all that fell from his lips."[10] His manner in preaching was without art; he abhorred affectation. His sicklied countenance was paler than usual when he entered the desk, his lips quivered and his voice was tremulous with emotion; he stood erect, and his action seldom went beyond a slight motion of his right hand and an expressive shake of his head. His eloquence contradicted the maxim of Demosthenes: it was not action, it lacked action, it was purely an emanation of the soul. "His conceptions often seemed superhuman."[11] The greatest preacher of that day, Robert Hall, after hearing a discourse from him on the Atonement, said that for a long time he "could think of nothing else but Mr. Watson's sermon;" he repeated its substance in his own chapel, and on successive Sundays referred to it in his pulpit. "He soars," said Hall, on another occasion, "into regions of thought where no genius but his own can penetrate." A calm pathos and unction pervaded his discourses. "Often," says a writer, who frequently heard him, "did he pour forth the stores of his mighty and well furnished intellect, so that he appeared to his hearers scarcely an inhabitant of this world; he led them into regions of thought of which they had previously no conception, and his tall and graceful form, his pallid countenance bearing marks of deep thought and of severe pain, and at the same time beaming with benignity and holy delight, served to deepen the impression of his incomparable discourses. He could soar to the loftiest heights apparently without an effort. The greatest charm of his preaching was its richness in evangelical truth and in devotional feeling, and in these admirable qualities, the soul of all good preaching, it increased to the last."[12]

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[10] Minutes, 1833, p. 230.

[11] Life by Jackson.

Throughout a life of incessant public duties he found time for extensive studies, and for writings which, while they doubtless invigorated him for his other labors, have perhaps profited the Church more than all the latter. His "Observations" on Southey's Life of Wesley effectually vindicated the great Methodist and his cause, in both the religious and literary world; his "Theological Institutes" are an elaborate and comprehensive body of divinity, and have elevated the theological character of Methodism, which has everywhere recognized them as standards in its ministerial course of study; his "Biblical Dictionary" has been a manual to its preachers; his "Catechisms" have formed the religious opinions of its children; his "Conversations for the Young" have instructed its youth; his "Life of Wesley" has been the popular memoir of its founder.

Besides these great literary benefactions to his Church, and many occasional pamphlets, he left an incomplete but able "Exposition of the New Testament," which has been published, and his collected Sermons are a monument of his genius.

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[12] Wes. Meth. Mag., 1833, p. 151.

He was distinguished in his more personal life by the deepest humility and self-depreciation,[13] by a tenderness and a cordiality of manners which were little suspected by persons who witnessed only the public efforts of his grand and severe intellect, and by a charity which embraced all men. It was his boast of Methodism "that it is abhorrent of the spirit of sectarianism. It meets all upon the common ground of loving the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Its sole object is to revive and extend Christianity in all Churches, in all the world; it teaches us to place religion not in forms and opinions only, but in a renewed nature, and especially in the Christian temper; and the writings of its venerable founder are, more than those of any modern divine, imbued with that warm and expansive affection, the love of the brethren, which our Lord made the distinguishing mark of discipleship. Others have dwelt upon it as a grace, he enforced it as a virtue. Others have displayed it as an ornament of the Christian character, he has made it an essential of practical piety."

Such was Richard Watson. His appearance in the arena of Methodism at this critical time was one of those providential facts which have marked its history and foretokened its destiny. His influence was hardly less important on its intellectual than on its moral character, and it is perhaps not too much to say that no superior mind has yet been given to its British ministry.

While such men were entering the Conference in this dark period of its history, others, hereafter to become important characters, were beginning, without its notice, their public labors, providentially raised up amid the general commotion which threatened the denomination. In a great revival which prevailed, notwithstanding these adversities, on Whitby circuit, and during which more than four hundred persons were added to its societies, Robert Newton, whose life was to be a virtual history of Methodism for more than half a century, was received into the Church.[14] In the same year Jabez Bunting began to "exhort" in public, and thus humbly commenced the career of usefulness which was to render him a prince among the leaders of British Protestantism.[15] In the same year also Daniel Isaac, afterward eminent as the "Polemic Divine" of Methodism, was rescued from the influence of Paine's infidel writings, and received into a Methodist class at Nottingham,[16] and in Ireland, Gideon Ouseley had already "passed from death unto life," and had sacrificed the pride of his social rank to wander about the land, calling his wretched countrymen to Christ at Fairs and Wakes, in the market-places and on the highways. These eminent men rose, like a new and resplendent constellation, above the horizon of Methodism in the darkest night of its history.

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[13] When invited by Newton to preach on a special occasion, in Liverpool, he wrote: "I have no nerves, no confidence, no sermon adapted to any such occasion, and no hope of getting one. If you knew how often I have disappointed and failed in the last six years, and the tortures inflicted upon me by the kind partiality of friends putting me forward to stations for which I have no adaptation, you would leave me alone." Jackson's Life of Newton, p. 120. New York, 1855.

Meantime some of the veterans of the Conference were falling at their posts. Thirty-four names appear in its obituary during this period. Many of them, worthy of historical commemoration for their extensive services, as seen in the list of Appointments, and in allusions of contemporary writings, must, by the lack of better records, remain with no other notice than the testimonies of their brethren in the Minutes. These notices, though extremely brief, seldom more than three or four sentences, are strikingly characteristic, and have usually a tone of devout triumph over death. In 1791 we read of John Richardson, "who, like his great Master, was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The uniformity of his life, the Christian simplicity of his manners, the meekness of his spirit, and the unction which attended his ministry for twenty-nine years in the city of London, will be ever remembered by many hundreds with gratitude to the God of all grace." After suffering twenty-six years from a severe asthma, which could not keep him from the pulpit, he died, uttering as his last words, "God is always with me." Under the same date we find another veteran noticed in a single sentence, "Robert Empringham, a faithful old laborer in the vineyard of his Lord." In 1793 we read, among others, of "John Shaw, who labored thirty years as a traveling preacher, was useful in every circuit where he was stationed, and died with unshaken confidence in God." Wesley, in the Minutes of 1766, mentions, as we have seen, Thomas Maxfield as his first lay preacher, and adds, "Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards, and a third, Thomas Westall." Turning to the obituary of the Conference of 1794, we read, "Thomas Westall, one of the first Methodist preachers. He preached the Gospel faithfully about forty years. He was a pattern of Christian simplicity and humble love. After suffering much, his triumphant spirit returned to God in the seventy-fifth year of his age." The veteran of forty years gets but these four sentences in the laconic mortuary records of the Conference. In the same obituary is the name of Abraham Bishop, a native of the Isle of Jersey, who began his itinerant labors in Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, and concluded them in the West Indies, "one of the holiest men on earth; he lived continually within the vail, and his spirit uninterruptedly burned for the salvation of souls." The name of Daniel Graham follows, a preacher for some years in Ireland, but who crossed the ocean "to carry the everlasting Gospel to the negroes in the West Indies," a man of "great piety and of a deeply crucified spirit;" both these laborers fell by the yellow fever, martyrs to their missionary devotion. The next year we read of

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[14] Jackson's Life of Newton, chap. 1.

[15] Bunting's Life of Bunting, chap. 5. New York, 1859.

[16] Everett's Polemic Divine; or, Memoirs, etc., of Rev. Daniel Isaac. London, 1859.

Benjamin Pierce, who, after preaching in England, Ireland, and the West Indies, died of a putrid fever on his way to Barbadoes. Calling the captain of the vessel to his side, "Tell my friends in Barbadoes that I died happy in God," he exclaimed, and expired. John Cook, another West India martyr, departs "in the triumph of faith," under the same pestilence, from a lodging, prepared apart for him, on a hill in Tortola. Almost every year the Minutes henceforth record a mournful list of such martyrs, but the list of appointments to the islands enlarges continually. No climate has ever yet barred out Wesleyan missionaries from the heathen; no call for laborers has ever been unanswered in the Conference.

In this numerous catalogue of the dead are some historical characters, of whom fortunately we have fuller information.

Duncan Wright, whose conversion and preaching in the army, in Ireland, and travels among the Scotch Highlanders, have already been narrated,[17] departed to his rest early in 1791, "an old faithful laborer in the Lord," says the Conference. On his death-bed he remarked that at a given time he had entered into "a superior light and greater liberty than he had ever enjoyed before;" and from that hour "he walked constantly in the light of God's countenance, and could not be satisfied any day without a direct and clear witness of his acceptance with God." "I am a witness," he added, "that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin. O the goodness of God to a poor sinner! The Lord has finished his work, has cleansed me, and filled me with his fullness. O what a weight of glory will that be, since thy weight of grace, O Lord, is now so great!" He suffered much, but was undismayed at death, and joyous under his severest pain. "Jesus is come!" he at last exclaimed, and died while a group of his brethren were kneeling in prayer at his bedside.[18] They buried him in Wesley's own tomb, in the City Road graveyard.

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[17] Vol. i, book iv, chaps. 1 and 5.

[18] Jackson's Lives of Early Meth. Preachers, vol. i, p. 273.

Joseph Cownley, another itinerant hero, fell amid the agitations of 1793, and, it is supposed, partly by their effect upon his mind. He had traveled more than a quarter of a century, notwithstanding an incurable malady which was attended with almost continual suffering. His abilities as a preacher "were very uncommon," say his brethren as they mourn his death. "His seriousness was almost proverbial; he lived and died a copy of the truths he taught." Wesley pronounced him "the greatest preacher in England." He was particularly devoted to the poor and afflicted, seeking out their wretched retreats and bearing to them the consolations of the Gospel. In the early part of 1792 it was evident to his friends that he was fast ripening for heaven. The contemplation of the future state seemed to absorb all his soul. In prayer with his family and friends a holy pathos breathed in his words; "the tears flowed from his eyes, and his approaches to the throne of grace indicated the closest communion with God." Life had few ties to retain him. He had outlived his first and most of his warmest friends, for nearly all of those who had shared his friendship and divided his affections, he had seen borne to the grave.[19] He was noted as a peacemaker, and had such a sensitiveness to all discords among brethren, that he could not be induced to stay in any meeting, for Church business, where they occurred, except for a momentary, but affectionate testimony against them. When the controversy respecting the sacraments prevailed, his susceptible spirit suffered inexpressibly. He had administered them, and favored the wish of the people for them. He did not attend the Conference at which it was decided, by lot, not to allow them for one year; but when he heard of the decision he was deeply afflicted. Having previously announced that he would give the Lord's Supper, on a Sabbath, at a chapel of his circuit, he knew not what to do; he retired into the country to preach and disappointed the society. On his return he sunk under a severe attack of illness, and, longing for the final repose, departed to it with joy and thanksgiving.[20] "It is better for me to be dissolved, that I may be with Jesus," he said, and "died without a struggle or a groan." A brother veteran, Christopher Hopper, who had seen many a "fight of affliction" by his side, on hearing of his departure wrote, as only such an old fellow-laborer could: "Is my dear, dear, and well-beloved Cownley dead? No; he sleepeth. Who can tell what my poor heart feels? The dream is ended; this momentary life is over; he is no more, no more here! Farewell, dear brother Cownley! I shall hear and see thee no more on the stage of this mortal life; but I hope I shall soon behold thee among the glorified saints in the celestial Jerusalem, the city of our great God. There, there we shall meet to part no more. Glory be to God, I am the next man on the list. Time passeth, death approacheth, the Judge standeth at the door, and eternity is come!" Cownley was the friend and correspondent of Wesley, Charles Wesley, and Whitefield; the generous heart of the latter especially clung to him, notwithstanding the separation of the Calvinistic Methodists from their Arminian brethren. He was considered a thorough theologian; he had read, it is said, nearly every important theological work in his language. In England, Scotland, and Ireland he had labored with great success, though oppressed by his chronic illness as by a slow martyrdom. He suffered in many of the fierce persecutions of early Methodism; we have seen him facing the mob with Hopper in the north of England,[21] and he was one of the "goodly company" of preachers indicted with Charles Wesley as disturbers of the peace at Cork.[22] "The priests, the magistrates, and the mob," says a contemporary writer, inspired by the memory of those heroic scenes, "were determined to crush them; but sinners were brought out of darkness into light, and exchanged the tyranny of Satan for the glorious kingdom of liberty and love. Many were awakened and converted; the gates of darkness were opened; the pillars of hell trembled, and numbers experienced that the kingdom of heaven is within us." His death was lamented as that of an old hero; a vast crowd attended his funeral, following his corpse to the chapel with tears, and thence with sobs and singing to the grave. "There was great mourning in the societies for him."

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[19] Early Meth. Preachers, vol. i, p. 127.

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[20] Kilham's Life, p. 60.

[21] Vol. i, book iv, chap. 2.

[22] By a misnomer he was called in that famous "presentment" Joseph M'Auliff. Early Meth. Preachers, i, p. 99.

In a few months he was joined in heaven by his faithful co-laborer, John Valton, who is recorded in the Minutes of 1794 as "a pattern of holiness, of charity, and of zeal," and a "plain, convincing, powerful preacher." We have seen him renouncing popery and the army for the itinerant ranks, and pursuing his new warfare with extraordinary success.[23] In the agitation that now shook the Church he maintained steadfastly his hope of the common cause, and ascended to his rest with triumphant joy. Agonizing sufferings could not baffle his spiritual victory. "Whoever entered his chamber," says his biographer, "found he was still a preacher, exhorting all to embrace Christ and fully close with the Lord."[24] An aged preacher, Richard Rodda, called to see him on his death-bed; the dying evangelist stretched out his hands to receive him, exclaiming: "Welcome, welcome, blessed servant of the Lord! I am happy, I am happy!" "O my brother," he said to a later visitor, "for the last four days my soul has constantly been in a state of inward glory." On being asked if he suffered much pain, his answer was, "Pain is not an infliction, but a blessing." "Prayer!" he exclaimed, "I have done with prayer now; I can love, I can praise, but I cannot pray." Uttering the words, so often on the lips of dying saints, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," he "fell asleep in Jesus."

Thomas Hanby, who was president of the Conference in 1794, died in 1796, the oldest traveling preacher in the

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[23] Vol. ii, book v, chap. 5.

[24] Life and Labors of Rev. John Valton, by Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, p. 162.

Methodist Connection, having regularly traveled forty-four years."[25] He was noted for the moral beauty of his character. His temper was remarkably mild and gentle, and he was called the "benevolent and meek Thomas Hanby."[26] He was an evangelical hero, nevertheless, and bore well the brunt of the warfare of early Methodism.

His mother died in his childhood; his father was a drunkard, and before his eighth year he was cast out upon the world to make his own way in it. In his youth one Joseph Cheeseborough, a shoemaker and a Methodist, from Leeds, who, having received the truth himself, was willing to impart it to others after the general example of the early Methodists, came to Barnard-Castle, where young Hanby resided. The good shoemaker held a meeting every evening, with a few neighbors privately, and "in an upper chamber, for fear of the mob." They read the Scriptures and Wesley's books, sang hymns and prayed together. Hanby went with his youthful companions to annoy them; "but," he writes, "something within" him said that "these despised and persecuted people were able to show him the way of salvation." His naturally tender conscience had many a time suggested that subject to him. He repeated his visit, begged to be admitted as a hearer, and "felt sweetly drawn to seek God" among them. The parish incumbent heard of these gatherings, and, becoming alarmed, persuaded Hanby and others to "form another religious society on rational principles," and less dangerous to the Church, promising to attend sometimes himself. The experiment was tried; in a short time the society was larger than that of the praying shoemaker; but the young inquirer found them dead formalists, "who could play at cards, take their pleasures, and conform to the world in almost anything." He returned to his first brethren. Of course the shoemaker was soon followed by the itinerants, and Hanby heard them with surprise and tears as they proclaimed their message in the open air, while "the blood ran down their faces from the wounds received from stones and pointed arrows thrown at them as they were preaching." Wesley came, but was interrupted by the mob, which played a fire engine upon the assembly, Hanby and his few religious friends doing their utmost to stop the outrage, till they were overpowered by the rabble. Under these unfavorable auspices he found at last "the way of salvation." "God," he says, "continued to draw me with strong desires, and I spent much time praying in the fields, woods, and barns. Any place and every place was now a closet to my mourning spirit, which longed for the Day-star to arise in my poor benighted soul. And it pleased infinite mercy, while I was praying in a dark place, to set my weary soul at liberty. The next day the Lord was pleased to withdraw the ecstacy of joy, though I had no condemnation, and I had well nigh given up my confidence, thinking it was nothing but a heated imagination. But the Lord met me again while I was in the fields, my usual place of retirement; and from that time I was enabled to keep a weak hold of the precious Lord Jesus."

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[25] Minutes of 1797.

[26] Memoir in Jackson's Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i.

He now started on pilgrimages to Newcastle and Leeds, in order to see the Methodist societies, thinking that if he "were among more experienced Christians he might be taught the ways of the Lord more perfectly." He spent some months among them, boarding in their families, and was exceedingly comforted and edified by attending preaching night and morning, and conversing with many mature Christians. He returned to share his new instructions with his few associates at Barnard-Castle. And now, he says, "I walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; and my delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law I meditated day and night."

His comfort was at last interrupted by "a sudden impression that he must preach the Gospel." He repelled it as a temptation, but it returned, and with it "a horror of great darkness fell upon him." "I remembered," he writes, "the wormwood and the gall that the preachers drank at Barnard-Castle, and said in my heart I will not preach." He had been in great perplexity and despondency for some time, when he heard of a poor woman of the society, who was dying, but was "wonderfully happy." He had read of such deaths, in Wesley's publications, but had never witnessed one. He hastened to her house, "praying the Lord on the way to remove his intolerable load," and, if it was his duty to preach, to give him a token of the fact through this dying saint. He found her Christian friends praying with her. She called him to her bedside and said: "God has called you to preach the Gospel; you have long rejected the call, but he will make you go; obey the call, obey the call."

He resolved to obey it, and on the next Sunday began to speak in public at Bromley. Two persons were converted under the discourse. He preached three times that day, and thenceforward, for nearly half a century, traversed the land an unfaltering evangelist, in spite of many sufferings from want and mobs. He was the first Methodist preacher who visited Ashburn, where the rabble greeted him with such clamors that his voice was drowned, and he saw some of his friends struggling and bleeding among them. At Leek the rioters besieged his inn; the landlord entreated him to escape, fearing that the house would be pulled down; he mounted his horse and rode through the crowd amid flying stones and dirt, "while they were gathering from every part of the town, crying, 'Kill him! kill him!'" At Burton-upon-Trent he obtained permission to preach in the house of an honest shoemaker, and some of his hearers were awakened under his first sermon; but, at the second, the mob, who had engaged a powerful idiot as their leader, and received his oath that he would kill the preacher, broke the window-shutters, dashed in the windows, and followed him from room to room. He saw the insane leader in pursuit, with an iron implement in his hand, showing "the fury of a fiend, and foaming at the mouth like a mad dog."

"I now concluded," he writes, "that all was over with me, and said, 'Lord, give me strength to suffer as a Christian; nor may I count my life dear unto myself for thy sake'" But one of the rabble, an athletic and noted boxer, suddenly stood on the defense for him, led him, in defiance of the rioters, through their midst, and putting him in front, bade him "run," keeping back the maddened throng till he reached the fields and escaped. He was brave, though proverbially mild, and soon returned to Leek, where he formed a society of twenty-four members. The mob again assailed him there, and broke into his lodgings to drag him away. A woman "who neither feared God nor regarded man" looked out of her window, and calling him to take shelter in her house, saved him; the rabble burned him in effigy the next day; but he triumphed at last, and the courageous woman afterward became one of the trophies of his success and joined the society. At another time he was furiously mobbed at Burton-upon-Trent. He believed, he says, he should have had, that night, the honor of martyrdom had not one of the leaders of the riot turned in his favor and defended him. Such deliverances were not uncommon in the persecutions of the early Methodist itinerants; their resolution commanded admiration even from the mob; for there is often real, though rude, courage in the heedless men who are carried away by the excitement of riots, and courage is naturally generous, and instinctively sympathizes with bravery in others. Wesley, as we have seen, learned well this fact, and usually conquered his boisterous assailants by it.

"In weariness and painfulness," says the tried itinerant, "in hunger and thirst, in joy and sorrow, in weakness and trembling, were my days now spent. And I have frequently thought, if God would excuse me from this hard task, how gladly should I embrace the life of a shoeblack or of a shepherd's boy. I was surrounded with death, and could seldom expect to survive another day because of the fury of the people. And yet it was, 'Woe unto thee if thou preach not the Gospel.'" He persevered under continual trials, and with singular success. He was still often mobbed; his journeys were long and exhausting; he suffered from want; he was robbed of the scanty money which was necessary to pay his way on his routes; but everything seemed, sooner or later, to turn to account in his favor. While riding toward Canterbury to preach, three soldiers rushed upon him with pistols, and took his watch and his pittance of two shillings and eightpence, which were to him an important capital; "indeed," he says, "sometimes if a halfpenny could have purchased the three kingdoms, I had it not for weeks together." The robbers whispered their achievement to their military comrades, with whom the town was crowded, as an invasion was expected from France. The joke, as it was considered, of robbing a Methodist itinerant, excited the curiosity of the troops to see and hear him, and many of them were thus brought under the influence of the Gospel; he received at least fifty of them into the society before he left the circuit.

Through much of England and Scotland did Thomas Hanby declare the word of life, "in season and out of season," till he died venerated in all the Connection as its oldest ministerial patriarch. On the last day of his public labors he preached twice, and lead four or five classes. Stricken under an agonizing malady, his physician was called and inquired respecting his symptoms. "I am departing, but have fought the good fight," was his reply. Two of his ministerial brethren visited him. They were likeminded with him, and stood at his deathbed as comrades in arms by an old hero departing in the moment of victory. They spent, says one of them, "some time in solemn prayer, that the Lord would accompany his dear servant through the valley of the shadow of death; that a convoy of angels might be sent to conduct him to the paradise of God; and that an abundant entrance might be administered to him into the peaceful regions of everlasting day. O what a solemn season of love was this! The power of the Highest overshadowed us, and the glory of God filled the place. We all found ourselves brought near the gates of heaven! A few moments after we arose from our knees, and were watching to see this blessed man draw his last breath, when he quietly, without a sigh or groan, fell asleep."

Another aged hero, who, though without a place on the Conference roll, has left an illustrious name in the history of the Methodistic movement, departed to his rest in this period of trial. In the memoirs of one of the leading contemporary preachers we read, Dec. 8, 1796: "I spent a profitable hour with that excellent man, Captain Webb, of Bristol. He is indeed truly devoted to God, and has maintained a consistent profession for many years. He is now in his seventy-second year, and as active as many who have only attained their fiftieth. He has no family, and gives to the cause of God, and to the poor of Christ's flock, the greater part of his income. He is waiting, with cheerful anticipation, for his great and full reward. He bids fair to go to the grave like a shock of corn, fully ripe." Again we read: "Wednesday, Dec. 21. Last night, about eleven o'clock, Captain Webb suddenly entered into the joy of his Lord. He partook of his supper, and retired to rest about ten o'clock in his usual health. In less than an hour his spirit left the tenement of clay to enter the realms of eternal bliss. He professed to have had some presentiment that he should change worlds during the present year, and that his departure would be sudden." And again: "Saturday, Dec. 24. This afternoon the remains of the good old captain were deposited in a vault under the communion-table of Portland Chapel. He was carried by six local preachers, and the pall was supported by the Rev. Messrs. Bradford, Pritchard, Roberts, Davies, Mayer, and M'Geary. I conducted the funeral service, and Mr. Pritchard preached from Acts xx, 24. It was a solemn season, and will long be remembered by those who were present."[27]

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[27] Biog. of Atmore, in Wes. Meth. Mag., 1845, p. 427. See vol. i, book iv, chap. 5, of this work. A further account of Capt. Webb will be given in the first volume of the History of the M. E. Church in the United States.

Thomas Webb was a brave man, and, like most brave men, had a soul of such generous warmth as made his preaching peculiarly effective. Wesley, after hearing him in London, said: "The captain is full of life and fire; therefore, though he is not deep or regular, yet many who would not hear a better preacher flock together to hear him, and many are convinced under his preaching."[28] He was a lieutenant in the army, and lost an eye in fighting, under Wolfe, on the Plains of Abraham. In 1764 he devoted himself to a religious life, and joined a Methodist class. Being in a congregation, at Bath, which was disappointed by its preacher, he stepped to the altar, wearing his regimentals, and addressed it, narrating particularly his own Christian experience. He thus began his public career as a Methodist local preacher. Sent to America as a barrack-master, he opened his house at Albany for prayer and preaching. He went to New York city and aided Embury in founding Methodism in the New World. For some time he was its chief evangelist, visiting Philadelphia, Long Island, and other places, and proclaiming the truth, in his military costume, to the astonishment and awakening of hundreds. John Adams, President of the United States, heard him in Philadelphia, and admired his eloquence. After his return to England he resided in Bristol, where he was active in the erection of the Portland-street Chapel, under the altar of which he now rests; but he still went forth preaching, in his military dress, in many parts of the country, and accomplishing great good till his warfare was ended. His sermons were very effective with military men, who admired his noble mien and commanding voice. One of these, John Parsons, heard him speak in the open air at Salisbury, and gives us a glimpse of the zealous captain's manner. With all that reverence which he had been wont to pay to his superiors he stood before the preacher, (whose piercing eye he thought scrutinized every individual present,) prepared to listen with deep attention. The service commenced by singing a hymn, with which, we are told, the military hearer was highly delighted; a solemn and earnest prayer was then offered up in behalf of the assembled multitude; and, another hymn having been sung, the preacher read his text from his pocket Bible, and addressed the people in an extemporaneous discourse of considerable length, during which "the admiration of Parsons was excited to the highest pitch; not indeed by the preacher's sermon, but by the earnestness of his manner and his powerful voice, which so wrought upon the military feelings of Parsons that he thought the word of command, by such an excellent officer, would distinctly be heard throught the line from right to left." The sermon being ended another hymn was sung, and a short prayer concluded the meeting. John Parsons's favorable opinion was won for the Methodists by this sermon. He afterward himself became a powerful local preacher, and, having done much good in various parts of England, during forty-five years, he too departed to the hosts above, in his seventieth year, shouting as he went, "When I get to glory I will make heaven ring with my voice, and wave my palm over the heads of the saints, crying Victory! victory in the blood of the Lamb!"[29]

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[28] Wesley's Works, vol. iii, p. 487. Am. ed.

The name of Hester Ann Rogers is historical and saintly in the annals of early Methodism. For more than half a century her "Memoirs," notwithstanding some marked defects, have had a salutary influence on the spiritual life of the denomination, especially among her own sex. The wife of an eminent itinerant, her Christian labors in England and Ireland were hardly less useful than his own. She was Wesley's housekeeper at City Road Chapel, and ministered to him in his last hours.[30] She was an exemplary witness of the Methodistic teachings respecting Christian Perfection; and Fletcher, of Madeley, found in her religious conversation and correspondence aid and consolation to his own sanctified spirit. Being in her company on one occasion, he took her by the hand, after hearing her remarks on this subject, and said: "Glory be to God! for you, my sister, still bear a noble testimony for your Lord. Do you repent your confession of his salvation?" She answered, "Blessed be God, I do not." When departing he again took her by the hand, saying, with eyes and heart uplifted, "Bless her, heavenly Power!" "It seemed," she writes, "as if an instant answer was given, and a beam of glory let down! I was filled with deep humility and love; yea, my whole soul overflowed with unutterable sweetness."[31] This hallowed and happy temper marked her whole Christian life. She was a Class-leader, and sometimes had charge of three of these weekly meetings, which devolved upon her the spiritual care of nearly a hundred members. Like many other early Methodist women, she occasionally preached. Her addresses were remarkable for their good sense and quiet moral power. Her prayers were especially significant and impressive; "the divine unction which attended them, added to the manner in which she pleaded for instantaneous blessings, was," says her biographer, "very extraordinary, and felt by all present."

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[29] Dredge's Biog. Record, etc., of Happy Deaths of Members of the Wesleyan Society in the Salisbury Circuit, p. 197. London, 1833.

[30] She was also one of his correspondents. See his letters to her, Nos. 1231–1245, Works, vol. vii, p. 189–197.

She was generally known in the Methodist societies, and in their present trying exigencies they were called to mourn her sudden decease. She left them, however, by a death which was full of pathetic beauty, though attended by the saddest anguish of her sex. After giving birth to her fifth child, "she lay composed for more than half an hour, with heaven in her countenance, praising God for his great mercy, and expressing her gratitude to all around her." She took her husband's hand, and said, "My dear, the Lord has been very kind to us; O he is good, he is good! But I'll tell you more by and by." In a few minutes afterward her whole frame was thrown into a state of agitation and agony. After a severe struggle for about fifteen minutes, bathed with a clammy, cold sweat, she laid her head on his bosom, and said, "I am going." Subduing his alarm, "Is Jesus precious?" he asked. "Yes, yes; O yes," she replied. He added: "My dearest love, I know Jesus Christ has long been your all in all; can you now tell us he is so?" "I can—he is—yes—but I am not able to speak." He again said, "O my dearest, it is enough." She then attempted to lift up her face to his, and kissed him with her quivering lips and latest breath. She died in 1794, aged thirty-nine years, during twenty of which she had walked continually with God "in white."

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[31] Memoirs of Mrs. H. A. Rogers, p. 137. Am. ed.

Thus in these troubled times was Methodism going forward in its beneficent mission, gathering to itself able laborers, and bearing others triumphantly to their final rest.

CHAPTER IV.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD FROM WESLEY'S DEATH TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE METHODIST POLITY, 1791–1797.

Benson's Powerful Preaching — His Tour through Cornwall — Out-door Preaching — Adam Clarke's Success — His Manner of Preaching — His Pastoral Fidelity — Clarke among the Colliers of Kingswood — Joseph Butterworth's Conversion and Services — William Bramwell — Great "Revivals" — "Devout Women" — Ann Cutler's Character and Usefulness — The Heroine of "Adam Bede" — Seth and Dinah Evans — Their Christian Labors and Usefulness — Samuel Hick, "the Village Blacksmith" — His Character and Labors — His Death.

In reviewing this long period of trial, our attention is arrested by not a few of those extraordinary occurrences which signalize, as providential, the early history of Methodism. While its altars were shaking with its agitations, the divine fire not only continued to burn upon them, but, in many places, glowed with an unusual brightness, throwing out its illumination over dark and distant parts of the land. The numerical growth of the denomination, during this interval, is surprising. It has been remarked that its leaders, unavoidably involved in the prevalent controversy at times, saw the necessity of prosecuting, more vigorously than ever, its spiritual work, and, turning as frequently as possible from the arena of debate, labored with unusual energy for its moral defense and its extension.

Benson, even while preaching too much on political subjects, as Clarke thought, was in the best sense a "revivalist." His biographer justifies him, as we have seen, by affirming that, aware of the strenuous efforts then making to spread Paine's politics with Paine's infidelity, and finding disaffection to the king generally associated with an open denial of Christ, like a faithful watchman, he warned the unsuspecting part of his hearers of their danger; but that in doing this he neglected not to "preach Christ crucified for the redemption of a lost world;" that when he preached he was generally attended by as many persons as could possibly press within the doors, amounting to considerably more than two thousand; and so powerful was his word, that his immense congregations were moved not only to tears, but to loud wailing, so that he was compelled to kneel down in the course of his sermons, to allow the people to relieve their minds by acts of devotion, when he arose and resumed his discourses.[1]

At the height of the troubles in Bristol (1795) he set out, after having accepted the Plan of Pacification, on a preaching excursion in Cornwall. He passed through its towns like a herald. In some parts of the country companies of the people came out to meet him and escort him on his way. "Never," he wrote, "did I see a place so crowded, and never did I see a congregation more affected than at Redruth while I discoursed on, 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?' We were informed of several who were awakened, and of some that were justified. Many hundreds continued in prayer a great part of the night." At Tuckingmill, the chapel being too small to hold a fourth part of the congregation, he stood up in a field, having a wall and a bank behind and on one side, on which some hundreds placed themselves, and the bulk of the congregation before him, consisting of about five thousand; he had not spoken long before many were "cut to the heart on all sides." Numbers were in tears, and many cried out in distress in different parts of the congregation. He continued speaking till he could speak no more. He then gave out a hymn and prayed. One woman came up to him before he got off the table, and, with streaming eyes and a heart full of gratitude and love, declared what God had done for her soul. As soon as he had dismissed the congregation, numbers thronged into the chapel, where many cried out in distress; and the leaders, local preachers, and others, continued in prayer with them most of the night. The next morning he was informed that about a score were converted, and not fewer than one hundred were awakened under the sermon. A Methodist writer records that, thirty-six years afterward the impression of this powerful appeal still remained on some minds, and "was deep and hallowed beyond description;" and another authority remarks that he became acquainted, in later years, with some of the "best educated, most intellectual, and energetic men of the locality, who were brought to cry mightily to God for pardoning mercy under this discourse." [2]

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[1] Treffry's Life of Benson, chap. 5.

At Penzance the chapel could not hold a third of his hearers; he took his stand in the market-place, and preached with great power on the "Judgment to come," to about six thousand people. At Tuckingmill again he cried aloud, to more than eight thousand, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink;" many wept around him. Ten thousand gathered to hear him, in the open air, at Gwennap, and "hundreds and even thousands wept for joy, or cried out in a manner that would have pierced a heart of stone." He preached to the excited multitude till night compelled him to stop, when they hastened to the chapel, where "many found peace with God." At St. Agnes, not more than a sixth of the people could get into the chapel; he went into the street and proclaimed to them, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." He returned to Redruth the same day, where, he says, "I was presented with such a sight as I never saw before. The whole street before me, as far almost as I could see, and all the alleys and houses on each side the street behind, on both sides of the market-house, and the market-house itself above and below, were all crowded with people as thick as they could stand. Some of our friends calculated them at fifteen thousand. I think there could not be much less. They were all as silent and serious as night while I explained Daniel v, 27. I continued preaching and praying from two till four o'clock. Many, I believe, felt the power of the word. Soon after I began, a postchaise with company came; but being unable to get through the crowd, they were obliged to unyoke the horses, and stay till all was over." In the evening he stood up in the amphitheater of Gwennap, Wesley's favorite preaching place in Cornwall; twenty thousand people surrounded him; "I saw," he cried unto them, "the dead, small and great, stand before God," etc. "Many," says a Cornish writer, "were converted that night, and others on the following morning."[3]

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[2] Smith's Hist. of Wes. Meth. II 5, 1.

In this remarkable journey he traveled in a gig, during a single month, about four hundred miles, and preached forty sermons to at least sixty thousand hearers. Never had he witnessed such an interest among the common people to hear the word of God. He was so thronged by eager listeners, on one occasion in the open air, that he called on all converted persons to retire to the outskirts of the assembly, that the unconverted might approach him and hear; but all stood more steadfastly than before; they seemed fascinated. "What," he cried, "all unconverted?" "In a moment the terrible conviction of sin ran like fire through the multitude, and conscience-stricken sinners fell by hundreds as if slain by these three words."[4] The impression of his mighty discourses remains on Cornwall to this day.[5]

Adam Clarke, always buoyant with hope for the Church, pursued, in these times of alarm, not only his learned labors for its future advantage, but was especially active as an evangelist. During 1793–95 his pastoral charge at Liverpool was remarkably prosperous. "Upon the very commencement of my preaching in Liverpool," he says, "the Lord began to work. Crowds attended. Such times of refreshing from his presence I never saw. Should I die to-morrow, I shall praise God to all eternity that I have lived to the present time. The labor is severe; nine or ten times a week we have to preach. But God carries on his own work, and this is enough. My soul lies at his feet. He has graciously renewed and enlarged my commission. All is happiness and prosperity. We have a most blessed work; numbers are added, and multitudes built up in our most holy faith. Such a year as this I never knew; all ranks and conditions come to hear us. The presence of God is with us; his glory dwells in our land, and the shout of a king is in our camp."

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[3] Smith, II, 5. 1.

[4] Bunting's Life of Bunting, chap. 3.

[5] The power of Benson's preaching is often alluded to, by contemporary Methodist writings, as indescribable. Robert Hall said he "is irresistible, perfectly irresistible." Etheridge's Clarke, p. 156.

He also was a "revivalist," and preached for immediate results. Alluding to one of his sermons at Oldham Chapel, Manchester, he says: "The congregation was really awful. Perhaps I never preached as I did this morning. I had the kingdom of God opened to me, and the glory of the Lord filled the whole place. Toward the conclusion the cries were great. It was with great difficulty that I could get the people persuaded to leave the chapel. Though the press was immense, yet scarcely one seemed willing to go away, and those who were in distress were unable to go. Some of the preachers went and prayed with them, nor rested till they were healed. God has done a mighty work." Again he says, of a sermon in Bristol: "I am this instant returned from King-street. The chapel crowded, crowded! And God in a most especial manner enabled me to deliver such a testimony, from 1 Thess. i, 3, as I think I never before delivered. I did feel as in the eternal world, having all things beneath me, with such expansions of mind as the power of God alone could give. I was about an hour and a half, and am torn up for the day."

"I would not," he said on another occasion, "have missed coming to this place for five hundred pounds. I got my own soul blessed, and God blessed the people. I felt, (stretching out his arms, and folding them to his breast,) I felt that I was drawing the whole congregation to me closer and closer, and pulling them away from the world to God." He is known to the Methodist world mostly by his writings, but his real greatness was in the pulpit. One of his hearers wrote: "In respect to the unawakened, it may indeed be said that he obeys that precept, 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.' His words flow spontaneously from the heart; his views enlarge as he proceeds, and he brings to the mind a torrent of things new and old. While he is preaching one can seldom cast an eye on the audience without perceiving a melting unction resting upon them."[6]

He effected much by his pastoral labors, and was faithful in the lowliest of them, visiting especially the poor. "I always," he said, "eat with people, either breaking a piece from off a biscut or cutting a crust from a loaf, to show them that I am disposed to feel at home among them; for even if they are very poor, there are many ways of returning the kindness without wounding the feelings of the party by whom the hospitable disposition is manifested." "So he has been known," adds his biographer, "to eat two or three potatoes in a cottage, and give a shilling pleasantly for each one of them."

He had tact as well as talent, and adapted himself to the rudest people. In his frequent preaching excursions he delighted to visit the colliers of Kingswood, where Whitefield and Wesley had proved their apostleship. At one of these visits, he wrote, "I took that glorious subject, 'How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God!' etc. My own soul was greatly watered, and the Lord sent a plentiful rain on his inheritance. Though the place was thronged, there was not a sound in it save that of my own voice, till, describing how God gave, to those who turned to him, to 'drink of the river of his pleasure,' to be filled with the very thing which made God himself happy, I raised my voice and inquired, in the name of the living God, 'Who was miserable? Who was willing to be saved? to be made happy? Who was athirst?' A wretched being, who had long hardened his heart by a course of uncommon wickedness, roared out, 'I am, Lord! I am! I am!' In a moment there was a general commotion. I seized the instant and told them to compose themselves and listen, for I had something more to tell them, something for every soul, a great, an eternal good. 'I am just going to open to you another stream of the river of his pleasure.' They were immediately composed, and in a very few moments such a flood of tears streamed down all cheeks as you have perhaps never seen; and all was silence but the sighings which escaped, and the noise made by the poor man who was still crying to God for mercy. In about half an hour we ended one of the most solemn and blessed meetings I ever ministered in. You will wish to know what became of the poor man. When he left the chapel he set off for the first prayer-meeting he could find, thinking God would never forgive his sins till he made confession unreservedly of all his iniquities. He began in the simplicity of his soul, and, with an agonized heart and streaming eyes, made known the evils of his life. They prayed with him, and God gradually brought him into the liberty of his children."

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[6] Letter from the wife of Pawson: Etheridge, p. 181.

From Liverpool Clarke was sent to London circuit, and there, during the rage of the controversial storm, labored with signal success. It was a large circuit, including much of the neighboring country, and extending from Woolwich to Twickenham, from Edmonton to Dorking. He preached almost daily, and walked more than seven thousand miles on his ministerial errands, in the three years of his appointment.[7]

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[7] A good layman was so interested in his preaching, as to accompany him to all his appointments, during these three years. He reported that Clarke, hardly ever, in all that period, preached a second time on the same text. Bunting says that this zealous layman walked with the

He could not be content without visible fruits of his labors; and he witnessed them—"such an outpouring of the Spirit of God as he had never seen." He wrote to a friend: "Every part of the city seemed to partake of it. The preachings were well attended, and a gracious influence rested on the people. After the regular service we have a prayer-meeting, in which much good is done. The first movement took place in our Sunday-schools; and in Spitalfields, New Chapel, West-street, and Snow's-fields simultaneously. Several sheets of paper would not suffice to give you even a general idea of what is going on. Last night we had our love-feast. For about half an hour the people spoke; when all was ended in that way, we exhorted and prayed with many who were in great mental distress. We remained four hours in these exercises. You might have seen small parties praying in separate parts of the chapel at the same time. The mourning was like that of Hadad-rimmon; every family seemed to mourn apart. We who prayed circulated through the whole chapel, above and below, adapting our prayers and exhortations to the circumstances of the mourners. Many were pardoned; to others strong hope was vouchsafed, and then was the advice given by each to his neighbor to believe in Jesus: 'He has pardoned me! O do not doubt, seeing he has had mercy upon me, the vilest of sinners.'"

It was during these labors, in London, that he was instrumental in the conversion of Joseph Butterworth, one of the most important laymen of Methodism, whose liberality reinforced most of its charities, especially its missions, of which he was for many years treasurer; and whose high social position, together with his exemplary piety, secured it much influence in circles which were not usually accessible to it. As a member of Parliament he became the associate of Wilberforce,

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learned doctor six thousand miles, heard him preach nine hundred sermons, eight hundred and eighty-nine of which were from different texts, and supped with him, after their evening excursions, about six hundred times either at Clarke's house or his own. Bunting's Life, I, 10.

Thornton, Buxton, and Thompson, and an influential representative of Methodism among the "Good men of Clapham." By his relations with the functionaries of the state he secured important facilities for the Methodist colonial missions, and he was often the organ of Coke, for such useful offices, with the government. His wealth, consecrated by his piety, enabled him to be a rare example of charity. On a given day of each week his house was the resort of all kinds of sufferers for aid, and his servant has reported to him nearly a hundred on his list at a time.

Joseph Butterworth was related to Clarke, their wives being sisters; but the opposition of Mrs. Clarke's family to her marriage with a Methodist preacher, had alienated her kindred from her. Little or no intercourse had been maintained between the two sisters; they had not seen each other for years; but the blessed charities of religion were now to reunite them, and to present both families, in the history of Methodism, as admirable examples of Christian affection and usefulness. Butterworth was a successful publisher, in London, when Clarke began there his ministry. Though the son of a clergyman, he remained an unconverted man. Accompanied by his wife, he went to hear Clarke preach. The sermon awakened the consciences of both husband and wife. Butterworth made known to his brother-in-law his new religious impressions; for he was penitently seeking rest for his troubled soul. On returning home and relating the fact to his wife, Clarke was surprised to learn that her sister had been there in a like state of mind. Both soon after found peace in believing, at the same time, under one of his sermons. They united with the Methodists, and lived and died examples of devoted piety. Butterworth became a class-leader and a representative man in the great philanthropic and religious enterprises of his day. Wilberforce delighted in his Christian friendship.[6] His death in 1826 was generally mourned as a bereavement to the common Christianity of the country. Watson commemorated him by an eloquent sermon. He was buried in City Road Chapel as one of the historical men of Methodism, and its walls are adorned by an elegant monument to his memory.

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[6] Life of Wilberforce, by his sons. He describes Butterworth as "full of matter and good works—all activity, God bless him." Vol. v, p. 258

Of course the fervent William Bramwell did not labor in vain during these days of agitation. At one time he sympathized much with Kilham, in his projects of "reform,"[7] but his deep piety saved him. In 1791 he rescued the Dewsbury circuit from dangerous strifes, and a widespread revival ensued. It followed him to Birstal circuit, in 1792, where "all opposition, distrust, and coldness ceased; preachers, leaders, and people uniting with one accord to promote the great work. On Easter day fifty souls were converted. The congregations were everywhere crowded, the word of God had free course, and about five hundred souls were added to the societies of the circuit, besides what were necessary to supply the vacancies caused by deaths and removals."[8] This excitement extended to Leeds circuit, and is said to have become more general than any revival that has occurred there, before or since; a thousand persons were added to the societies in a few months. It spread through Staffordshire, where Mather traveled and preached, with great success, from day to day. It reached the northern counties. Throughout Yorkshire, Robert Lomas's labors were "in demonstration of the spirit and of power." Seven hundred souls were added to his societies on Halifax circuit in less than a year.

So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, says Bramwell's biographer, that, at the close of his labors on Birstal circuit, the number in society was doubled; without including the multitude of those who were still under serious impressions, but had not united themselves in Church fellowship, and others who were in that state of probation which is usually observed in the economy of Methodism prior to their admission to al. its privileges.

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[7] Wes. Meth. Mag., 1845, p. 333.

[8] Smith, II, 5, 1.

Atmore, in a letter to Coke, describing this extraordinary revival, says: "The great work of God in Halifax circuit and its neighborhood is almost indescribable: I scarcely know how to relate the circumstances thereof. It began at Greetland, which for many years had been proverbially dead, so that the preachers had often serious thoughts of entirely giving it up. It has commonly been carried on in prayer-meetings, which were singularly owned of God. Frequently ten, fifteen, or twenty souls were either justified or fully sanctified at one of these meetings. Very often, while one of the brethren was earnestly engaged in prayer, the power of God descended, and some began to be deeply affected; many were much agitated in their bodies, and even fainted away; they remained in distress for several hours, till they were sensibly delivered from their misery, and enabled to rejoice in God. I have conversed with some hundreds of them, and have been surprised to hear the clear and distinct accounts which they gave of the work upon their souls. Some have now evinced the reality of this change for twelve months by a holy life, so that the mouths of gainsayers are stopped. I hope this work will spread over the whole earth."

Some disorders were almost unavoidable in the excitement which attended this great awakening. Pawson, as prudent as he was saintly, wrote to Atmore: "It will not do to have disorder and confusion. The people may shout and make noise enough at Greetland and at Bradshaw, and it may bring the wild mountaineers together, who may receive good; but still the word of the Lord is clear; God neither is nor can be the author of confusion. I trust that the Lord will direct, and enable you so to speak and act, that the benefit may continue and increase on every side." The lesson was not forgotten.

There were not a few "devout women," esteemed generally among the societies, whose public labors served much to maintain the spiritual integrity of the Connection during these distracted times. Mary Fletcher, Sarah Crosby, Ann Tripp, and others, most of whom had been correspondents of Wesley, were more or less abroad, and actively but prudently admonishing the excited people to peace and holy living. Ann Cutler had received the approbation and counsels of Wesley in her public activity among the societies. She was instrumental of the commencement of this great revival, during a visit to Bramwell at Dewsbury. Bramwell, who published an account of her useful life,[9] says: "She came to see us at Dewsbury, where religion had been, and was then in a low state. In this circuit numbers had been destroyed through divisions. Ann Cutler joined us in continual prayer to God for a revival of his work. Several, who were the most prejudiced, were suddenly struck, and in agonies groaned for deliverance. The work continued almost in every meeting, and sixty persons in and about Dewsbury received sanctification, and walked in that liberty. Our love-feasts began to be crowded, and people from all the neighboring circuits visited us. Great numbers found pardon, and some perfect love. The work in a few weeks broke out at Greetland. Ann Cutler went over to Birstal, and was there equally blessed in her labors. She went into the Leeds circuit; and, though vital religion had been very low, the Lord made use of her at the beginning of a revival, and the work spread nearly through the circuit. Very often ten, or twenty, or more were saved in one meeting. She and a few more were equally blessed in some parts of the Bradford and Otley circuits. Wherever she went there was an amazing power of God attending her prayers. This was a very great trial to many of us; to see the Lord make use of such simple means, and our usefulness comparatively but small."

Ann Cutler seemed not of this world, but rather a pure being descended from heaven to bless the Church in these days of strife. She consecrated herself to a single life that she might have convenience for public usefulness. "I am thine, blessed Jesus," she wrote in a formal covenant, "I am wholly thine! I will have none but thee. Preserve thou my soul and body pure in thy sight. Give me strength to shun every appearance of evil. In my looks keep me pure; in my words pure, a chaste virgin to Christ forever. I promise thee, upon my bended knees, that if thou wilt be mine I will be thine, and cleave to none other in this world. Amen." The sanctity and usefulness of her life would have recommended her, had she been a papal nun, to the honors of canonization. Her piety rose to a fervid and refined misticism, but was marred by no serious eccentricity of opinion or conduct. It expressed itself in language remarkable for its transparent and pertinent significance, by diligent but unostentatious religious labors, and a meek and self-possessed demeanor which was characterized by a sort of pensive tenderness and a divine and tranquil ardor. The example, conversation, and correspondence of Wesley, Perronet, and Fletcher had raised up a large circle of such consecrated women, and had left with them a fragrant spirit of holiness, which was like ointment poured forth about the altars of Methodism. Ann Cutler seldom addressed the people in public; her power was in her prayers, which melted the most hardened assemblies. She was "instant in prayer." It was her habit to rise, like the Psalmist, at midnight to call upon God; and the time from her regular morning hour of waking, four o'clock, till five, she spent in "pleading for herself, the society, the preachers, and the whole Church." She died as she had lived. On the morning of her departure she began, before the dawn, to "ascribe glory to the ever blessed Trinity, and continued saying, 'Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, and glory be to the Holy Ghost,' for a considerable time." At last, looking at her attendants, she exclaimed, "I am going to die. Glory be to God and the Lamb forever!" These were her last words.

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[9] Short Account of Ann Cutler, Tract No. 133, Meth. Tract Soc., N. Y

It was during this period that Dinah Evans, wife of Seth Evans, himself a useful local preacher, commenced her public labors in Derbyshire. The hand of genius has portrayed her almost angelic character, truthfully though in a work of fiction; and has won for her admiration and tears wherever the English language is used.[10] She is described as "one of the most pure minded and holy women that ever adorned the Church of Christ on earth." In her childhood she was remarkable for her docility, conscientiousness, and sweet disposition. Her early girlhood was consecrated to religion, and when Wesley's travels and labors had raised up, throughout the land, societies in the social worship of which women were allowed to share, her rare natural talents found an appropriate sphere of usefulness which no other denomination except Quakerism then afforded. She preached in cottages and sometimes in the open air; her appearance, her womanly delicacy, and her affecting eloquence subdued the rudest multitudes into reverence and tenderness toward her; and she assisted in an extraordinary degree in laying the foundations of the Church in many benighted districts. She was a constant visitor to the abodes of the poor and wretched, to prisons and almshouses; she penetrated into the dens of crime and infamy, the charm of her benign presence and speech securing her not only protection but welcome among the most brutal men. She even followed the penitent murderess to the gallows; ministering the word of life to her till the last moment amid the pitiless and jeering throng. Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker philanthropist, could not fail to sympathize with such a woman; she became her friend and counselor, and encouraged her in her beneficent work.

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[10] Adam Bede. By George Elliott. It will be a satisfaction to most readers of this popular fiction to know that the heroine married, not Adam Evans, as the author represents, but his brother Seth. The sermon of Dinah, on the Green, is no exaggerated example of her talents and beautiful character, if we may judge from more authentic accounts. See "Seth Bede, etc. Chiefly written by himself." Tallant & Co., London, 1859.

Dinah Evans represented, in her gentle but ardent nature, the best traits of both Quakerism and Methodism.

Seth Evans, then a class-leader, heard her at Ashbourne, and has left a brief allusion to the occasion: "The members of my class invited me to go to Ashbourne with them, to hear a pious and devoted female, from Nottingham, preach. Truly it may be said of her, she was a burning and shining light. She preached with great power and unction from above to a crowded congregation. Her doctrine was sound and simple. Simplicity, love, and sweetness were blended in her. Her whole heart was in the work. She was made instrumental in the conversion of many sinners. The morning of the resurrection will reveal more than we know of her usefulness."

She became his wife, and assistant in humble efforts for the religious improvement of the rustic inhabitants of Royston and its neighboring villages. A great religious interest soon ensued in that town, where there were but few Methodists, and in Snelston, where there were none. Hundreds flocked to hear the Gospel from her lips, in the open air or in barns, for the cottages could not accommodate the crowds. Classes and prayer-meetings were established in many houses, the village alehouses were deserted, and a visible change came over the whole region. Her example of interest for the poor excited the charity of her neighbors, and the afflicted found sympathy and relief such as they never before received.

Seth and Dinah Evans founded Methodism in Edlaston, which, before his death, was adorned with a substantial Wesleyan chapel. They removed from Royston to Derby. It is said that old men, who were then little children, still recall the sorrowful day of their departure from the village, for it was mourned as a day of bereavement not only to the poor, but to all its families. They founded Methodism in Derby by forming a class. They preached out of doors in all the adjacent villages. At Millhouse, about thirteen miles from Derby, Seth Evans organized a society of four members which soon increased to between twenty and thirty, and afforded two preachers to the Conference, one of whom became a missionary to the West Indies. His wife also began a class of three or four females, and in a short time she had three such weekly meetings under her care. They frequently walked fifteen miles on Sunday, to preach in neglected hamlets "Never," he wrote years after her death, "did I hear my dear wife complain. On the contrary, she always held up my hands, and urged me to take up my cross and not grow weary in well-doing. A few years after our arrival at Millhouse a great revival broke out in Wirksworth, and also at our factory. There was a most powerful shaking among the hardest and worst of sinners. These were indeed happy days. There are a few left who witnessed those happy scenes; but the greater part of the converts are gone to their rest."

Dinah Evans died at Wirksworth, of a lingering disease, during which it is said that sermons were heard, from her death-bed, more "eloquent than ever fell from her lips on Royston Green." She passed away with the meek, unutterable peace which had given so much dignity and grace to her life. Her husband could not but suffer deeply from the loss of such a wife. It shattered his health; his faculties began to fail; he could seldom allude to her without tears. Unable to preach any more, he spent the remaining years of his life in visiting the sick and the dying, and at last, with unfaltering hope, departed to rejoin her in heaven. So exemplary and beautiful with holiness had been their united lives, that one who knew them well, but cared not for his own soul, said he "did not believe that our first parents in Eden were more pure than they."

Such examples of rare character and usefulness, in obscure life, are seldom favored with the recognition of the historian; but the truer instinct of higher genius perceives their peculiar, their beautiful, and often sublime significance to our common humanity; and Dinah Evans and the Dairyman's Daughter live in our literature, teaching and consoling hundreds of thousands, for whom most of the great names of history have little or no meaning.[11] No history of Methodism that omits such cases can be just; they are among its most genuine historical facts. Lowly laborers like these have not only exemplified its best spirit, but have promoted its progress hardly less effectively than its more eminent representatives.

The name of Samuel Hick, "the Village Blacksmith," is known wherever the Methodist movement has extended. He knew nothing of learning beyond the arts of reading and writing, which he acquired after his conversion; and his use of his native Yorkshire dialect was hardly intelligible to the inhabitants of other districts. He was eminently holy, notwithstanding an irrepressible, natural humor, and was strong in common sense and native eloquence. "It is hardly possible," says a Methodist historian, "to estimate the fruits of this man's labors and prayers. Nor was his usefulness, notwithstanding his humble abilities, confined to those of his own rank in life: gentlemen, country squires, members of Parliament, even peers of the realm, often heard from his lips the truth of God, delivered in a manner which, from the holy unction with which it was charged, roused in their minds serious thoughts of God and religion; and not unfrequently so as at once to convey instruction, and awaken real respect for the truth and its zealous teacher."[12]

Samuel Hick was early apprenticed to the blacksmith's craft; it made him a robust man, both in nerve and muscle. His round, generous face, his athletic form, marred somewhat by a slight stoop and a disproportion of his shoulders, the effect of hard work at the anvil; his commanding voice; his aptitude for practical illustrations of his discourses, drawn from common life; his simple language, the more acceptable for being in the rude dialect of his neighbors; his tender feelings, often expressed in tears; his humor, seldom sarcastic, but rich in geniality and in surprising appositeness to his subject; his courage, which the hardiest of the mob respected too much to challenge; his liberality, which was his greatest weakness, and often left his pockets empty, and would have reduced him to want, had it not been for the care of his wife; his overflowing religious cheerfulness, uttering itself in hymns or familiar benedictions;[13] and, above all, the real sanctity of his spirit, procured him an influence over the popular sympathies which was hardly rivaled by that of any other preacher of Methodism in his day.

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[11] It was during these troubled times that the Dairyman's Daughter joined the Methodists, and pursued her humble course of usefulness on the Isle of Wight. See vol. ii, book 5, chap. 11.

[12] Smith, II, v, 2.

His strong but susceptible heart very early received deep religious impressions. In his childhood he heard brave John Nelson preach in the open air, surrounded by a clamorous mob. He never forgot the scene. It taught him to admire the spirit of the Methodist itinerants before he could comprehend their teachings. In his eighteenth year he went with his youthful comrades, according to the custom of the shire, to witness the wrestling matches and prize-fights, on Whit-Monday, in York. Richard Burdsall, a noted Methodist preacher, had mounted a "block" in the field, and was gathering a crowd around him by singing a hymn. Hick loved music, and hastened to the spot. The discourse quickly won his interest; but a clergyman pushed through the throng, denouncing the Methodist intruder, declaring that he should not preach there, and threatening to pull him down from the "block." As he was about to fulfill his menace, Hick, who afterward said he could have lost the last drop of his blood for the preacher, rushed to the persecutor, and presenting his stout clenched hands, exclaimed, in the language of the "ring," from which he had just come, "If you disturb that man of God I will drop you as sure as ever you were born!" The clergyman's countenance changed with fear; he endeavored to escape through the crowd; Hick generously took him under his own protection and conducted him safely away, but was immediately back again near the evangelist. The discourse produced a vivid impression on his conscience. He subsequently followed Burdsall to other "appointments," traveling, he says, many scores of miles, and never leaving him without improvement.[14] He afterward went to Leeds to hear John Wesley, and returned wondering at the great preacher as "something more than man," an "angel of God," but still more at the truth he had heard, for he was now convinced that he had "neither faith nor works which God could approve." He married and set up business for himself; but he could not divert his attention from the convictions of the truths which he had received. One night he suddenly "jumped out of bed," and fell upon his knees; his groans awoke his wife, who, supposing he had been seized with dangerous sickness, hastily arose to call in her neighbors. "I want Jesus—Jesus to pardon my sins!" he exclaimed to her. "My eyes," he wrote years afterward, "were opened; I saw the sins I had committed through the whole course of my life; I was like the Psalmist; I cried out like the jailer." He had a hard struggle; but before the dawn he had entered into a new life, and thenceforward his faith grew "brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."

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[13] His common salutations were religious: "A fine day, bless the Lord!" "I am in good health, bless the Lord!" "Bless the Lord for this good shower!" etc. Such greetings usually put strangers in an agreeable humor with him, but not always. He was once accosted by an old Jew in London: "Bless the Lord! here is a fine morning," said the good blacksmith. "It ish, it ish fery fine," responded the Jew; "vat be te besht news in te city?" "The best news that I can hear," answered Hick, "is that Jesus Christ is pardoning sinners and sanctifying believers." "Tuff and nonshensh! It ish all telushion!" exclaimed the Jew, and escaped in a rage. This was a rare exception, however. Hick had no cant, and his simple heartiness was admired by even profane minds.

He was now intent upon the conversion of his neighbors, and began with them that very morning. "I thought," he writes, "I could make all the world believe, when daylight appeared. I went to my neighbors, for I loved my neighbor as myself. I wished them all to experience what I felt.

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[14] The Village Blacksmith; Life of Samuel Hick, by James Everett, chap. 1. New York, 1842.

The first that I went to was a landlady. I told her what the Lord had done for me, and that what he had done for me he could do for her, exhorting her to pray and believe." "What," she replied, "have you become a Methodist? You were a good neighbor and a good man before, and why change?" She refused to hear him. "Your sins must be pardoned or it will be impossible for you to get to heaven," he added, and hastened to the fields to pray for her. "To my surprise," he says, "when I went back she was crying in the doorstead. She asked me to forgive her. 'O yes, that I will,' I said; 'and if you will let me go in and pray with you, the Lord will forgive you too.'" He was admitted, and knelt down and prayed with her. "It was not long," he adds, "before the Lord blessed her; and he thus gave me the first soul I asked for. He can do a great work in a little time. She lived and died happy. This encouraged me to go on in the duty of prayer."

Such was the characteristic beginning of Samuel Hick's career of rare usefulness. Without neglecting his craft, (by which, in later years, he became independent enough to give up work, and consecrate his whole time to religious labors,) he now "went about doing good." Others of his neighbors were soon converted; they induced the itinerants to supply them with preaching; a class-meeting was formed, and thus was Methodism established in Micklefield. He preached at his anvil. "I had," he says, "a good opportunity, as nearly the whole town came to my shop, and I was always at them. I found my share of persecution; but this did not daunt me, nor prevent me from calling on sinners to repent, believe, and be converted." Noblemen, fox-hunters, and rustics, who went thither for his services, heard from him the sublimest truths, though often with the humblest illustrations. If his words sometimes failed to impress them, his genuine Christian temper nearly always commanded their respect or wonder. Rude as had been his early habits, he now knew how to bear offensive treatment with meekness, and often conquered by his spirit when his arguments failed. A young lady, whose palfrey had lost a shoe, rode up to his shop; he was touched with compassion at her apparently declining health. "Dost thou know, child, that thou hast a soul?" he asked her; "thou hast one whether thou knowest it or not, and it will live in happiness or misery forever." It was a "word in season." On her return home, her father observed that something had seriously impressed her mind. Hearing her explanation of the fact, he hastened to the smithy, armed with a long bludgeon, and, without a word, struck its faithful workman a blow on the side which nearly prostrated him. "What art thou about, man? what is that for?" exclaimed the blacksmith. Not doubting that his religion was the cause of the attack, he suddenly turned to his assailant his other side, and, lifting his arm, said, "Here, man, hit that too." The passion of the enraged father was subdued; the example was irresistible, and he hastened away in astonishment. On his death-bed he sent for the good blacksmith and begged his pardon. "Pardon thee!" cried Hick, "pardon thee! I have nothing against thee, but if thou art about to die we will pray, and see if the Lord will forgive thee." The dying man was penitent, and departed with hope. His daughter never forgot the warning at the smithy, and the blacksmith had the happiness of seeing her and two of her children members of a Methodist class. Four conversions, says his biographer, are thus to be traced to a word fitly spoken.

It is impossible better to convey an idea of this extraordinary man than by such particulars; it was this Christian spirit, this apt zeal, this habit of being "instant in season and out of season," together with his original genius for eloquence, that shaped his whole life, and crowned it with an amount of usefulness which few men of his day surpassed.

He soon joined a band of "prayer-leaders," who, under the direction of the itinerants, held religious meetings in cottages and barns, and sometimes in the open air, in many villages of Yorkshire; and, during most of these years of agitation, the "Village Blacksmith" and his humble brethren kept much of the county alive with religious interest.

About the middle of our present period (1794) a new epoch occurred in his religious experience. "About this time," he writes, "there was a great revival of the work of God at Sturton Grange, near Micklefield. The meetings were held in Rig Lair.[16] Some hundreds of souls were converted to God, and many were sanctified. I was one of the happy number, not only convinced of the necessity of Christian holiness, but who, blessed be the Lord! proved for myself that the blood of Christ cleanseth from sin." His whole subsequent life attested this new change. Thenceforward, "sanctification" of heart and life was his favorite theme, in the pulpit and out of it, till his death. One of his old companions in the faith, a man of similar character and celebrity,[17] says: "He experienced it upward of thirty years; lived and died in the full possession of its excellencies. O with what warmth, affection, and pathos he used to speak of his enjoying the perfect love of God in his heart! that love which casts out tormenting fear, and strongly and sweetly constrains the whole soul to engage in the whole will of God, as revealed in his word."

A widespread influence went forth from this meeting at Sturton Grange; it pervaded nearly all Yorkshire. The "Village Blacksmith" was indefatigable in his religious labors. He was licensed as a local preacher; his talents developed, and his popularity became general. Wherever he went, for nearly half a century, crowds flocked to his artless but powerful ministrations. He founded Methodism in several places, and promoted the erection of chapels in others by his peculiar success in begging money for them. He became a tireless evangelist and a favorite platform speaker at missionary anniversaries. In chapels, in the open air, in prayer-meetings, in missionary meetings, in the rural districts, and in the metropolis, Samuel Hick was always a chief attraction to the multitude, and always bore humbly his popularity. His spirit won all hearts, disarming sometimes violent opposers. He seldom disputed with an opponent, or with any person, but usually fell abruptly upon his knees and conquered by prayer. A Yorkshireman threatened to "knock him down" for a word of exhortation which the blacksmith addressed to him. The latter, dropping upon his knees, began to pray; his opponent took to flight. Pleading, in vain, with a rich miser, for a donation to Coke's West India missions, he at last fell upon his knees in prayer. "I will give thee a guinea if thou wilt give over," said the covetous man; but he continued to pray for the miser, and the heathen for whose salvation a guinea would be so insignificant a pittance. "I tell thee to give over," exclaimed the miser again; "I will give thee two guineas if thou wilt only give it up." Rising suddenly, he took the money and bore it away to a missionary meeting, held in the neighborhood, where "he exhibited it on the platform with the high-wrought feelings of a man who had snatched a living child from the clutches of an eagle."

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[16] Lair—a barn, in the west of Yorkshire.

[17] William Dawson; Everett's Village Blacksmith, chap. 3.

When seventy years old he was still active, with the energy of youth, in his religious labors. He died, in his seventy-first year, a death of great triumph. Two Wesleyans spent the last night with him, in singing and prayer. "Glory, glory, glory! I shall see Him for myself and not another," he frequently exclaimed. "I have spent whole nights in reading and prayer," says one of the watchers, "but the night spent by the bedside of Samuel Hick exceeded them all.[18]

Such were some of the successes and trophies of Methodism during these seven years of internal conflict. Observing men, among the leaders of the Connection, could not fear for its ultimate fate while such indications were cheering them. At the next conference Adam Clarke wrote: "Notwithstanding our great losses by the Kilhamites, we have had a considerable increase this year. We are now, glory to the God of heaven! not less than 100,756 in Great Britain and Ireland. Strange to tell, all the Irish collections have increased. The characters of the preachers examined—all gone through; and, among upward of three hundred traveling preachers, not one charge of immorality brought against any soul; and yet everything was sifted to the heart. After all, never was there a body of men in the world who winked less at any appearance of evil than these; and I solemnly believe no body of Christian ministers, since the world began, so large, was ever found more blameless."[19]

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[18] His language was characteristic to the last. A friend visited him, and employing in prayer, at his bedside, the common expression, "Make his bed in affliction;" "Yes," responded the blacksmith, with promptitude and energy, "and *shak* it *weel*, Lord!" Everett.

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[19] Etheredge's Clarke, p. 208.

CHAPTER V.

CONFERENCES AND DEATHS OF PREACHERS, FROM 1797 TO 1805.

Conference Presidents — Coke's Attempt to obtain Episcopal Ordination, from the Establishment, for the Wesleyans — Missions — Progress in the West Indies — Ministerial Support — Preachers' Fund — Qualifications of Candidates — Committee of Privileges — Lay Co-operation — Female Preachers — Deceased Veterans — William Hunter's Death — William Thompson — Murlin, the "Weeping Prophet" — Thomas Olivers, "The Cobbler," Polemic, and Hymnist — His enormous Wickedness — His singular Reformation — He rides about the County paying his Debts and Preaching — His Hymns — His Adventures with Mobs — Alexander Mather — Christopher Hopper — Triumphant Deaths.

THE controversial struggle having terminated, by the settlement of the Wesleyan ecclesiastical system, in 1797, the proceedings of the Conferences afford not many facts of striking interest for some years. The Church advanced continuously and tranquilly; strengthening its weak positions, maturing its financial plans, enlarging its ministry, and its missions at home and abroad; and multiplying its literary provisions, by the Biblical and other writings of Coke, Clarke, Benson, Watson, Isaac, Townley, and similar representative men.

In the eight Conferences, between the years 1797 and 1806, presided respectively, Joseph Benson, Samuel Bradburn, James Wood, John Pawson, Joseph Taylor, Joseph Bradford, Henry Moore, and Dr. Coke.[1]

But few modifications were made during these years, by the Conference or otherwise, in the economy of the Connection. Coke, whose attachment to the national Church was strong, notwithstanding the treatment he and his brethren had received from it, opened a correspondence with the Bishop of London, proposing to strengthen the relations between the Establishment and the Wesleyans, by having a given number of the preachers of the latter episcopally ordained, for the administration of the sacraments in their societies. This course, he believed, would produce a grateful attachment to the national Church on the part of the Methodists, as they would thereby still recognize their membership in it, and derive the sacraments solely from its episcopal authority. He pleaded for the measure on the ground that many of the Methodists had scruples of conscience against receiving the sacraments from the hands of "immoral clergymen;" that they included among such all who "frequented card-tables, balls, horse-races, and theaters;" that the denomination was already numerous, comprising between eighty and ninety thousand adults in close connection, and about half a million of regular hearers; and that, unless some such substitute for their recently adopted provisions for the sacraments were made, the deviation lately begun would, "in time, bring about a universal separation from the Establishment." His plan was communicated, by the Bishop of London, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who rejected it as both impolitic and impossible.[2] And thus was Methodism again repelled from the Church in which it had its birth, for which it had done so much, and from which it had suffered so much; repelled at a period in which it had come forth from the severest tests, and presented a moral and numerical force that fully justified Coke's estimate of its power to serve or injure the Establishment. Its dignified forbearance with the national hierarchy, during subsequent years, while wielding, too, a popular force which, if directed to the side of Dissent, could have shaken the Establishment to its foundations, presents the most striking contrast, with the supercilious demeanor of the latter toward it, that the modern religious history of England affords. Whatever may be thought of the expediency of this forbearance it is creditable to the Christian moderation of the Connection, to its respect for the sentiments of its founders, and its loyalty to the constitution of the realm. Coke had proposed, as early as 1791, to Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, a complete reunion of the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal bodies in the United States; the latter Church had then dwindled into general inefficiency, the former included sixty thousand communicants, and three hundred thousand hearers, with about two hundred and fifty traveling preachers;[3] but the proposition was rejected.

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[1] Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the first, vols. i and ii. London, 1813.

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[2] See the Correspondence in Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 14.

Whether these plans were wise or not, they acquit Methodism of the charge, so frequently preferred against it, of voluntary alienation from the Church of England and its American offspring.

As neither of these schemes came under the notice of the British or American Methodists, it is impossible to affirm, with certainty, what would have been their popular reception at that early day; but it is not to be supposed that Coke proposed them without deciding, in his own mind, the probabilities of this question, and in his letter to the Bishop of London he expressly says that he is sure "the men of greatest influence in the Connection would unite with him in the measure," and "the people be universally satisfied."

Among the noteworthy facts of the Wesleyan Conference, in this period, was its increased attention to the Missionary work. In 1799 it resolved to take the West India Missions under its own care, recognizing Coke as its agent; it ordered that a collection should be made, as soon as possible, in all its Sunday congregations in Great Britain, for "that blessed work," and requested Coke to draw up a statement of the condition of the Missions, with a short address to the people, and to send printed copies of it to all the superintendents. Coke, in conformity with its vote, issued the same year a document, in which he stated that though they had been engaged but thirteen years in the West India Missions, they had there about eleven thousand communicants, besides the thousands who had died in the faith.[4] "In the love-feasts and band-meetings at St. John's in Antigua, Basse Terre in St. Christopher's, Kingston in St. Vincent's, Kingston in Jamaica, I have been charmed," he added, "with the testimony which the believing negroes bore for Jesus Christ. One after another, with the utmost order, they gave an account, in their negro dialect, of the work of grace upon their souls in its different stages, with as much clearness and perspicuity as any believer in Europe; and their own masters confess that they are the best and most faithful servants which they possess. We have now 2,800 in society in Antigua, above 1,800 in St. Christopher's, 500 in Nevis, above 3,000 in Tortola and the other Virgin Islands, 100 in Dominica, 2,000 in St. Vincent's, 44 in Barbadoes, 130 in Grenada, near 600 in Jamaica, and 120 in St. Bartholomew's. All these we are not ashamed to call members of our society. Inclusive of the above, we have between fifty and sixty thousand under instruction, of all of whom we are in hopes that we shall be able in time, through the grace of God, to give a good account. And the Lord has been pleased to raise up about fifty preachers among the negroes." In 1800 the Conference resolved that a yearly collection, as in Europe, should be made in all the West India islands where it was practicable, for the support of the work. Every superintendent was ordered to propose as soon as possible, to the quarterly meeting, any local preacher qualified for, and willing to go on a foreign mission, that he might be afterward proposed to the district committee, and lastly to the Conference. In 1801 it appointed Coke treasurer of the Mission Fund.

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[3] Coke's letter, as given by Bangs, vol. ii, ann. 1808.

Preachers were also designated to Missionary service at large in Ireland, and in 1799 Gideon Ouseley, James M'Quigg and Charles Graham began their memorable labors in this capacity. In 1800 Coke obtained the sanction of the Conference for a scheme of Missionary efforts in the destitute portions of Wales, and John Hughes and Owen Davies, Welsh preachers, were commissioned for the purpose.

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[4] Methodist Magazine, 1800, p. 42.

The session of 1804 appointed the first Missionary Committee; it was rendered necessary by the increasing magnitude of the Missionary operations, which could no longer be managed by the single agency of Coke, indefatigable as was that extraordinary man. He was authorized to act as general superintendent of all the Missions; but the committee, consisting of all the preachers in London, were to be his counselors, and to take charge of the Missionary finances. In 1805 it was ordered that the Missionary collection should be permanently annual.

The financial support of the ministry also engaged the attention of the Conference during this period. The Preachers' Fund, established in 1763,[5] was essentially modified at the session of 1799, according to a scheme proposed to a public meeting at Bristol, the preceding year, by Moore and Clarke. It had required the annual payment of one guinea from each preacher, by which he was entitled to receive, when unable to travel, a guinea per annum for the several years he had been in the itineracy. If he had traveled but five or ten years when he became disabled, he received but five or ten pounds yearly. Even after the services of a quarter of a century this ratio could not amount to a comfortable support. Many of the veterans of the itineracy were now sufferers for want of better aid; the Conference therefore heartily adopted the new scheme of the Bristol meeting, the chief points of which were: that every member of the society, who should be superannuated by the Conference, should, if he had traveled under the direction of the Conference less than twenty years, receive annually twenty-four guineas; if he had traveled twenty years, and less than twenty-five years, thirty guineas; if he had traveled twenty-five years, and less than thirty years, thirty-five guineas; if he had traveled thirty years and less than thirty-five years, forty guineas; if he had traveled thirty-five years or upward, forty-five guineas; the payments to commence from the time the preacher is superannuated, and to be made every six months. It was required that every new member should pay ten guineas as an initiatory fee, and three guineas annually. It was resolved that the contributions of the people to the fund should be discriminated from the fees of the preachers, and be appropriated to superannuated preachers and widows, not to "supernumeraries," excepting such of the latter as hitherto had claims, which should not be affected by this regulation as a retrospective law. An important auxiliary means of relief to the ministry was formed this year, in London, by Joseph Butterworth, Joseph Bulmer, William Marriott, and other leading laymen. It was called the Preachers' Friend Society, and was designed to afford "casual" pecuniary assistance to "itinerant Methodist preachers and their families, when in sickness or otherwise distressed." One of its rules was, that "great delicacy shall be observed with respect to the names of those preachers who may have had assistance; these shall at all times be kept as private as can be consistent with respect to the welfare of the society." "It was begun," says a writer of that day, "without solicitation from the preachers, and has been attended with the happiest effects."[6]

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[5] See vol. i, book 4, chap. 6.

The Conference of 1800 was constrained to appeal to the people, in a formal address, for relief. It had been burdened with increasing debts ever since the death of Wesley. The multiplication of the preachers and their families, and the deficits in their support by the circuits, had rendered it necessary for them to draw largely on the Book Room, at London, and on the Preachers' Fund, for the relief of effective but embarrassed men: a debt of more than a thousand pounds was thus imposed upon their publishing house. Their appeal to the societies proposed an average addition to the Yearly Collection, of a shilling from each member. It was so far responded to, that at the Conference of 1802 "every debt was swept away, and the Connection was enabled to pursue its course unembarrassed."[7]

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[6] Myles's Chron. Hist., ch. 10. See also Meth. Mag. for August 1801, and July 1802.

In 1805 it was resolved that no more preachers should be "called out to the work than the Connection could support," and that particular care should be taken, in stationing them, to make "the removals as short as possible, much money having been sometimes needlessly expended in removing families to a greater distance than was either necessary or expedient."

The Conference of 1802 adopted some important suggestions of Entwisle respecting the qualifications of candidates for the itinerant ministry. Hitherto they had been recommended by the quarterly meetings, which sent their names to the district meetings, whence, in the absence of any objection, they were transmitted to the Annual Conference, where they were usually enrolled on probation. It was now required that the candidate be examined before "all the brethren present at the district meeting, respecting his experience, his knowledge of divine things, his reading, his views of the doctrines of the Gospel, and his regard for Methodism in general." After the examination he was to withdraw, and his suitableness for the ministerial office be frankly discussed, and his recommendation to the Conference be determined.

The Conference of 1803 is memorable for the first appointment of the Committee of Privileges, which has been an important means of defense to the Connection. The extensive ramifications of Methodism in the Colonial as well as the domestic parts of the realm, the interference of the civil administration abroad with the Wesleyan missions, the repeated attempts of the national legislature to restrict the rights of worship among Dissenters, and other political exigencies, rendered it necessary that such a committee should be in permanence, and be charged with the vigilant defense of the rights of the denomination. The Conference appointed, for this purpose, two preachers, Coke and Benson, and six of its chief laymen, among whom were Butterworth and Bulmer of London, and Thomas Thompson of Hull. It also secured a "general solicitor." It ordained that the committee should be annually appointed, and be consulted previously to the commencement of any lawsuit on the part of the whole or any portion of the Connection. The appointment of laymen on this committee is an important fact, as one of the earliest indications of the new policy which was afterward matured by Bunting, and by which lay co-operation became more and more active in the administration of the Church. Wesley had early, though informally, received laymen to his conferences; but the example had become obsolete. Laymen had interposed effectively in the pacification measures of 1795 and 1797; but these were exigent and temporary occasions. The most important, if not the first example of the new policy, was the enactment of the Conference of 1801, authorizing the stewards of the circuits to attend the district meetings of the preachers, and advise respecting the financial settlements.[8] The innovation was destined to go on peacefully, but successfully, until Wesleyan Methodism should virtually have the fact, without the theory, of lay representation.

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[7] Smith, II, 5, 3.

At this session it was asked, "Should women be allowed to preach among us." The answer was, that, in general, they ought not. Two reasons were given. One was that a vast majority of the people were opposed to female preaching; the other, that it was not necessary, there being a sufficiency of preachers, whom God had accredited, to supply all the places in the Connection. "But," added the Minutes, "if any woman among us thinks she has an extraordinary call from God to speak in public, (and we are sure it must be an *extraordinary* call that can authorize it,) we are of opinion she should in general address her *own sex*, and *those only*. And upon this condition alone should any woman be permitted to preach in any part of our Connection; and, when so permitted, it should be under the following regulations: 1. They shall not preach in the circuit where they reside until they have obtained the approbation of the superintendent and a quarterly meeting. 2. Before they go into any other circuit to preach, they shall have a *written* invitation from the superintendent of such circuit, and a recommendatory note from the superintendent of their own circuit."

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[8] Life of Bunting, ch. 12. It is a curious fact that, by the inadvertence of the secretary, this enactment is not mentioned in the Minutes of 1801. But on the last page of the Methodist Magazine, for the year, is the following note: "The following article should have been inserted in the Minutes of the last Conference, page 25, Q. 14, but was omitted by mistake of the secretary, viz.: 'That the superintendent of every circuit shall invite the general steward of his circuit to be present at the annual meeting of the district committee, during the settling of everything relating to the finances of the district; and every circuit steward shall accordingly have a right to be present, and to advise at the settlement of all financial matters.'"

The obituary of the Minutes of these eight sessions records some notable names. Not a few of the heroic men who had endured the violence of mobs, and other persecutions, in Wesley's day, having seen their cause come forth successfully from the great trial which followed the death o their beloved founder, were prepared to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" and they now rapidly disappear from the scene.

In 1798 William Hunter departed, "full of peace, love, and joy," in his seventy-fourth year, after an itinerant career of thirty years. He is described as of grave and meek deportment; of a most "unassuming and modest carriage" in the company of his ministerial associates, always preferring them to himself in honor; as "dead to the world," and "for many years a happy possessor of that perfect love which casteth out fear." In his preaching, and indeed in all his conversation, his expressions were solid and weighty, and his manner, though very deliberate, was pecularly energetic and impressive, so that few could hear him without being affected.

Wesley published an account of this good man's Christian experience in the second volume of the Arminian Magazine,[9] from which we learn that he was bred a farmer in Northumberland; that he "felt a degree of the fear of God, and secret drawings of his love," when very young, but had no one to teach him the "right way of coming to Christ;" that when sixteen years old he heard Christopher Hopper, who had no sooner began to speak than the tender heart of the youth was deeply affected, "not with terror, but with love," and that he then laid aside everything which he thought was contrary to the will of God, and practiced all religious duties. He was persecuted by his young associates, and enticed to the ale-house, where he lost his peace of conscience, if not entirely his good resolutions; he "lived for months in a wretched state of mind;" under another sermon he was reawakened, and felt, he says, "all his inward parts to be very wickedness," all the sins of his life stared him in the face; he "roared for disquietness of heart, and wept and made supplications." For many weeks he was distressed with the fear that God had finally forsaken him. "I sought the Lord," he writes, "with all my heart in all the means of grace. I attended preaching on all occasions, and read the Scriptures with great diligence: the way of salvation, revealed therein through Christ, was made clear to me; and I pleaded nothing but the merits of Christ for forgiveness. I often rose in the night to read and pray. I felt great love to the Methodists, especially to the preachers, as the servants of the most high God, sent to teach us the way of salvation. The people took notice of me, talked with me, and wished me to cast in my lot among them. I did so, though I did not think myself worthy; and I bless God I have never felt a desire to leave them since. I continued mourning after the Lord, and at length he heard my cry. One day, as I remember, I was reading in a book where the writer was answering that objection concerning the day of grace being past: the Lord was pleased to send me deliverance; I found hope springing up, and a sense of his goodness. How did I admire the love of God, and the love of Jesus Christ to me! All my thoughts were swallowed up in heavenly contemplation; and I could truly say, The Lord is my life and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me."

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[9] Arminian Mag., 1779. Jackson's Early Meth. Preachers, vol, i.

He now began to pray and exhort among his neighbors. In an adjacent village he assembled a few poor people, and, reading to them the Holy Scriptures, "talked with them about their souls." A circuit preacher combined them in a class and appointed him its leader. He traveled far on Sundays to the preaching appointments, and when the itinerants failed to arrive, he was pressed by the people to take their place. In this way he became a preacher.

In 1767 Wesley called him into the itinerant ranks. Great religious excitements followed his ministrations, and on Barnard-Castle circuit "we had," he says, "such a work of God in several parts as I never saw elsewhere. Hardly anything of the kind in England hath exceeded it, both with regard to its swiftness and depth; the power of God bore all down before it."

For more than a quarter of a century he went to and fro in the land proclaiming the truth with increasing energy, breaking up new ground, forming new classes, and gathering multitudes into the societies. He especially enforced the doctrine of sanctification, preaching it from personal experience. "I prayed and wept," he writes, "at His footstool, that he would show me all his salvation; and he gave me to experience such a measure of his grace as I never knew before; a great measure of heavenly light and divine power spread through all my soul; I found unbelief taken away out of my heart; my soul was filled with such faith as I never felt before; my love to Christ was like fire, and I had such views of him, my life, my portion, my all, as swallowed me up; and O how I longed to be with him! I may say, with humility, it was as though I was emptied of all evil, and filled with heaven and God. Thus, under the influence of his power and grace, I rode upon the sky. My soul fed on angels' food, and I truly ate the bread of heaven. I had more glorious discoveries than ever of the Gospel of God our Saviour, and especially in his saving the soul from all sin. I enjoyed such an evidence of this in my own mind as put me beyond all doubt: and yet I never had such a sense of my own littleness, helplessness, and unworthiness as now."

After living as well as preaching this "full salvation," through years of severe labors and privations, he fell at his post, crowned with a befitting victory over death. His last sermon was on the words, "Be ye also ready," and it was heard as from a dying man. A peculiar glory circled his death-bed. "I am," he said, "a monument of God's goodness: glory be unto his name forever and ever! The Lord is my strength and my song; he is also become my salvation; the Lord be praised forever and ever!" To one of his ministerial brethren he named as the text for his funeral sermon, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He could not sleep. "Sleeping or waking," he exclaimed, "all is well: glory be to God forever!" To his numerous sympathizing visitors he preached and sung hymns almost continually, and seemed the happiest person present, though suffering extremely. One of his fellow-laborers says: "He burst into tears of joy, and taking my hand and kissing it, said, 'O how I love you, my brother!' Coming out of a short slumber, he cried out, 'Precious Christ! precious Jesus! What a sight is this! A poor unworthy creature dying full of faith and joy in the Holy Ghost.' When he was raised up to drink a little wine and water, he said with an air of holy triumph, 'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' And indeed, when we prayed in his presence, the glory of God filled the place. He would often whisper, 'When will my Lord come?' and when I observed, 'God's time is a good time,' he replied, 'All is well; all is well.'"

In 1799 William Thompson died in the sixty-third year of his age. Contemporary Methodist writings frequently allude to him as a man of rare wisdom and great influence, but no satisfactory record of his long ministerial life remains. The Conference Minutes treat him with the usual brevity of their mortuary notices. They say that he was an itinerant preacher for above forty years, being very young when he began to travel; that the Conference showed in what light they viewed him by choosing him for their first president after the death of Wesley; that he suffered extreme pain in his last illness, which he bore with great patience and with entire resignation to the divine will, and closed his useful life rejoicing in God.

Allusion has already been made to his important services in the seven years' controversy. His prudent mind steadied the tottering ecclesiastical structure of Methodism in its most doubtful day, and it owes to him its District Meetings and the Plan of Pacification.[10]

Following the short notice of Thompson are equally brief records, this year, of two other deceased veterans, John Murlin and Thomas Olivers.

Murlin was long known, in all parts of the Church, as its "weeping prophet;" but he wept not for sadness, but for joy. A simple, affectionate pathos attended his preaching, and his tears were his chief eloquence. He was born in St. Stephen's parish, Cornwall, in 1722, was early left an orphan, and apprenticed in his thirteenth year to a carpenter, who "lived utterly without God" and was excessively profane in his language. The young apprentice soon imitated his master's example, and became an adept in swearing, gaming, and drunkenness. Lord! he exclaimed, while reviewing these days in his old age, how great is thy mercy in sparing those that live in such open rebellion against thee!

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[10] See pp. 27 and 36. "Fewer traces are to be found of him than of any of his eminent contemporaries. My father used to speak of the old man's gravity of speech, spirit, and demeanor, and of the advantages he himself derived from his example and ministry." Life of Jabez Bunting, by his son, chap. 6. New York, 1859.

A Methodist itinerant crossed his path, and the hardened youth, upon whose ears the ordinary prelections of the national pulpit fell powerless, was smitten under the homely speech of the evangelist. He felt the burden of his sins to be insupportable. He fasted and prayed. "I grudged myself," he says, "the food I ate. I thought a brown crust was too good for me. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in me, and his word pressed me sore."[11] "I frequently kneeled at my bedside, and wrestled with God in prayer till midnight; and sometimes I was afraid to lie down in bed, lest I should awake in hell. At other times I fell on the ground, and roared for the very disquietness of my heart. Yea, and when I heard the preachers speak of the love of Christ, and of his willingness to save poor lost sinners, it fixed my convictions the deeper to think I should be such a rebel against so loving a Saviour."

He heard another itinerant and was encouraged; and under a discourse by a humble local preacher, he was enabled to say: "Lord, thine anger is turned aside, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." Years later he wrote that "although, since then, I have met with sore trials, and sometimes have been brought very low, yet, blessed be God! I have never lost my confidence."

In those days every Methodist, who could command language for ordinary conversation, was expected to pray in the meetings of his brethren and to bear his "testimony" in his Class. Murlin, though exceedingly diffident, was found to be a ready speaker, and his tenderness of feeling touched the hearts of the common people. The circuit preacher appointed him to the charge of a small Class near his home. He was struck, he says, with fear, and went out of the room, telling the itinerant he could not undertake it; but the latter insisted. To qualify himself better for this office, he bought a new large Bible and some other books. "I applied myself," he writes, "to prayer, and to the reading chiefly of the holy Scriptures. And it pleased God to open my understanding more and more, to see the wondrous things of his word." Such was the ministerial initiation of hundreds of the early Methodist preachers—the giants of those days.

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[11] Jackson's Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i.

The local preachers in his neighborhood were combined for systematic preaching in the adjacent villages. He was urged to join them, but shrunk from the responsibility. An "appointment" was disappointed of its expected preacher, and Murlin was called to occupy his place. He set out with intense anxiety. A crowd had gathered within and around the house; the "stand" was borne out into the open air; he mounted it with fear and trembling, and cried to the multitude, "Repent ye, and be converted!" His lips were touched as with "a live coal from off the altar;" tears ran down the faces of the people, and after many years the good impression of his discourse remained in that locality. He could no longer resist the call of his brethren, and joined the band of local preachers.

Wesley wrote him to go into West Cornwall and travel a circuit; he hesitated, but a second letter summoned him into the field: "So," he writes, "after a short struggle, I resolved to give up all for Christ, and accordingly, on the 12th of October, 1754, I took my horse, and without delay rode away into the West of Cornwall." He rather rode away into all England, for thenceforward, during nearly half a century, John Murlin was one of the most devoted laborers of Methodism. He suffered much of the time from a chronic ailment, which rendered it difficult for him to walk, or ascend the pulpit; "but in all circumstances," he wrote in advanced age, when alluding to this affliction, "I have chosen God for my portion, and the lot of my inheritance forever; he hath been my helper hitherto, and I trust he will help me to the end. O Lord, forsake me not in my old age! Lay thine everlasting arms beneath me, and give me a safe and comfortable passage through the valley of the shadow of death, and bring me to thy holy hill." He was at last struck with paralysis, and after lingering some time, "exceedingly happy," joined his departed fellow-laborers in the Church triumphant. He sleeps in Wesley's tomb at City Road Chapel, and a mural tablet, in that edifice, commemorates his faithful services. Pawson, who was his colleague on several circuits, says: "During all these years I saw nothing in him that I could reprove; he walked with God."

Thomas Olivers is one of the most interesting characters of early Methodism. He has already been noticed as a champion of the important controversy which divided the Calvinistic and Arminian leaders of the movement.[13] Wesley pronounced him "a full match for Toplady;" and Southey acknowledges his ability in that contest.[14] He was a man of genius, as his poetry and music attest. He produced one of the sublimest lyrics in the hymnology of our language, or of any modern language. His prose writings are perspicuous, vigorous, often eloquent, if not elegant.[15] His exuberant soul gave strength and fullness, sometimes majesty, to his prose, his poetry, and his preaching. He was a "sturdy Welshman;" as sturdy in his virtues as he had been in his vices. The latter were so enormous that, while we read of them in his bluntly honest and self-indignant autobiography, in the old Arminian Magazine,[16] we are astonished that such reprobacy could be awakened even by the thunders of Whitefield; that such imbruted humanity could rise, and at last soar heavenward, hymning, to all coming ages, the seraphic strain of "The God of Abraham praise." Such an example of the power of both genius and religion claims special attention in our narrative; for Thomas Olivers was unquestionably one of the noblest trophies of Methodism, an astonishing demonstration of its power, in the ministration of the Gospel, among the worst classes of the people. His account of himself is marked throughout by the individuality of his character, by candor, and by an interesting simplicity and directness, which, with its strange facts, render it the most dramatic of those numerous autobiographical sketches that Wesley inserted in the early volumes of his Magazine, and from which the history of Methodism derives its most significant and most entertaining materials.

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[13] See vol. ii, book v, chap. 2.

[14] Southey's Wesley, chap. 25.

[15] The introduction to his "Scourge to Calumny," addressed to Sir Richard Hill, in defense of Wesley, and alluding to the disparity between his own social position and that of the Baronet, would have been creditable to any English writer of his day.

[16] For 1779. See also Jackson's Early Meth. Preachers, vol. i.

He was born in Treganon, Wales, in the year 1725. He lost both his parents by death before he was five years old. His kindred took care of him till his eighteenth year, not neglecting his early education; for they sent him to school, he tells us, and taught him to "say his prayers morning and evening, to repeat the catechism, to sing psalms, and to go to church in general twice every Sabbath." He assures us, however, that "his carnal mind soon discovered itself," leading him into a "multitude of heinous sins." Our English forefathers were voluminous in profanity; it was rife about young Olivers, and he says that he knew only an old man or two ("whom all supposed to be crazy") who had any scruple about the prevalent blasphemy. A certain parishioner made it a very study, usually compounding "twenty or thirty" different expressions into one long and horrid oath. When not more than fifteen years of age Olivers was the rival of his "infernal instructor" in this vice, and was considered the worst boy in "those parts for the last twenty or thirty years."

When eighteen years old he was apprenticed to a shoemaker, but did not half learn his craft, because of his unconquerable idleness. Dancing and convivial company engrossed his time; and on the day of his majority he gave such scope to his inclination that, out of sixteen days and nights, he spent fifteen of them without once being in bed. He plunged into grosser vices, and found it desirable to retreat from the town; for, corrupt as it was, he was too debased for it. He went to Shrewsbury, where one of his amusements was to divert his associates with his profanity and vulgarity at places of public worship. He confesses, however, that in his incredible excesses his conscience made him miserable. "I thought, I live a most wretched life! If I do not repent and forsake my sins I shall most certainly be damned. I wish I could repent of and forsake them. If I could but hate them as I love them, I should then be able to lay them aside; but till then I despair of doing it; for I have always gone to church, and have frequently prayed and resolved against them, and yet I cannot leave them."

He resolved to attempt again to redeem himself. He thought he would "try the sacraments," and borrowed a popular book, called A Week's Preparation, read it on his knees, went to church, partook of the sacrament, maintained a strictly correct outward life for a fortnight, and, returning the volume, with profuse thanks, replunged into his habitual vices. Subsequently he was smitten down by dangerous sickness. On getting up again he wept, prayed, went to church twice every day, and read books of devotion at home. "For," he says, "I saw very clearly that if I had died at that time I certainly should have gone to hell." His resolution soon vanished, and again he was groveling in his depravity. With another young man, of like character, he "committed a most notorious and shameful act of arch-villainy." They deemed it best to escape from the town; Olivers leaving many debts unpaid, "as was generally the case," and his accomplice deserting his apprenticeship. They journeyed together through several towns, encouraging each other in vice, and at last reached Bristol, where Olivers passed through some sad and some comical adventures; but he forever had reason to remember gratefully that town, for there a good influence at last arrested him, and turned the whole current of his life.

The auspices were not very favorable for him there at first, for he found himself lodging with a "backslidden Methodist," now a drunkard. He sketches the scene characteristically. His landlord's wife "had been a religious woman, but was eaten up with the cares of the world. There was also a lukewarm Moravian in the house. With these I had various disputes, particularly about election, which I never could believe. One day the Moravian and I quarreled so highly that he struck me; and as he was a tall, lusty man, I knew I should have no chance in fighting him. However, for a whole hour I cursed and swore in such a manner as is seldom equaled on earth, or exceeded even in hell itself; and, what was the greatest aggravation, it was all in confirmation of a lie. For though I swore with all the rage of a fiend, and with all the diversified language of hell, that I would prosecute the man; and though I wished, perhaps not less than a hundred times over, that vengeance, ruin, destruction, and damnation might light on body and soul forever if I did not do it immediately; yet I never so much as attempted to do it. Indeed, such a habit of horrid swearing had I acquired, that though I saw it was dreadfully wrong, and at times wished and labored to break it off, yet on the smallest occasion I was carried away as by a mighty torrent; yea, I daily and hourly did it without any provocation whatever, and frequently not knowing what I did." We cannot doubt his fluency in profanity after this sketch of it; for the honest confession has an unmistakable smack of the old habit.

His drunken landlord was so shocked at his depravity that he threatened to turn him out of the house. But the scene suddenly changed. Helpless in his moral weakness, and apparently possessed of the very devil whose name is "legion," the wretched man lived as in a delirium of wickedness and misery. He met a multitude of people, one night, in the street, and inquired of a woman whither they were going. "To hear Mr. Whitefield," was her reply. "I thought," he writes, "I have often heard of Whitefield, and sung songs about him. I will go and hear what he has to say." He was too late; but went the next night three hours before the time. The text of the great preacher was, 'Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" The tears, trickling down the faces of hearers around Olivers, arrested his attention and roused him from a sort of stupor; and though, as he says, "when the sermon began he was a dreadful enemy of God and all that is good, and one of the most profligate and abandoned young men living," by the time it was ended his life was changed forever. It would have seemed that so sudden and so thorough a revolution, in the moral character of such a man, was impossible; but it was real, for the Gospel is "the power of God" unto salvation; and Olivers is one of the most surprising proofs of the theory that the restoration of the soul to virtue needs not the slow process of education; that, in its highest form, it is a miracle, wrought by divine grace, and possible to the most degraded minds, in circumstances even where the necessary conditions of moral culture are at first impracticable. Such was the opinion of Whitefield, Wesley, and their coadjutors, and their societies were filled with its examples. As Olivers stood in the crowd, hearing Whitefield, his fierce Welsh heart was broken. "Showers of tears," he says, "trickled down my cheeks. I was likewise filled with an utter abhorrence of my evil ways, and was much ashamed that ever I walked in them; and as my heart was thus turned from all evil, so it was powerfully inclined to all that is good. It is not easy to express what strong desires I had for God and his service, and what resolutions I had to seek and serve him in future; in consequence of which I broke off all my evil practices, and forsook all my wicked and foolish companions without delay, and gave myself up to God and his service with all my heart. O what reason had I to say *Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?*"

The apostate family, with which he lodged, were astonished, as well they might be, at his change, "seeing him weep almost incessantly." The native poetry of his strong soul burst forth with his new life. "The first Sunday after I was awakened," he writes, "I went to the Cathedral at six in the morning. When the *Te Deum* was read I felt as if I had done with earth, and was praising God before his throne! No words can set forth the joy, the rapture, the awe and reverence which I felt." He obtained again the Week's Preparation—this time with strong hope, and read it on his knees by day and by night. "This," he adds, "and the Bible were far more precious to me than rubies; and God only knows how often I bedewed them with my tears, especially those parts of them which speak of the love and sufferings of Christ. As to secret prayer, I was for some time almost continually on my knees." He actually became lame in one knee by frequent kneeling, and went about limping, and in a short time his other knee failed, so that it was with difficulty he could walk at all. "And so earnest was I," he remarks, "that I used by the hour together to wrestle with all the might of my body and soul, till I almost expected to die on the spot. What with bitter cries, unheard by any but God and myself, together with torrents of tears, which were almost continually trickling down my cheeks, my throat was dried up, as David says, and my eyes literally failed while I waited for God."

Let no man cavil at this simple, earnest record, however he may construe it. The lost man was struggling with the demon—struggling out of the abyss; and he did struggle out of it, and rose to a pure and noble life. In the presence of such facts we may rather remind ourselves of the hope they afford of the reclamation of the most fallen souls, even when all hope seems gone. The case of Olivers explains half the history of the Methodism of Whitefield and Wesley. It won such trophies by thousands—won them from the very "gates of hell," and by a "foolishness of preaching" which was jeered at by ecclesiastical dignitaries, like

Lavington and Warburton, who knew of no way of reaching such cases; and hooted at by the mobs, which it subdued and led, weeping, by tens of thousands, into its humble temples.

Though Olivers complains that he was, through all his life, too much inclined "in favor of rational religion," and prejudiced against "visions and revelations," it is not surprising that his own extraordinary regeneration disposed him at first to a degree of credulity. He records a few remarkable dreams and visions, and some very striking cases of sortilege; but his good sense preserved him from any serious abuse of such marvels.[18]

The reclaimed profligate proved the reality of his reformation. He forthwith began to repair, as much as possible, the wrongs of his life. He attempted to rescue his old accomplices in vice. Religious people could hardly credit his conversion, and seemed afraid to receive him; they discouraged his wish to join their societies, but he bore with meekness their apparent neglect. He loved Whitefield "inexpressibly," he says, and used to follow him as he walked the streets, and could scarce refrain from kissing the very prints of his feet. He went to Bradford; and there, for two years, never missed a single sermon among the Methodists, late or early, and that was the day of five o'clock morning sermons among them. He heard, he says, "generally with many tears." During the usual society meetings, after the preaching, where all but members were shut out, he would go into the field behind the chapel, and listen to their hymns with tears and prayers. "When they came out," he says, "I followed at a small distance those of them whom I thought most in earnest, particularly the preacher and his company, that I might hear something further concerning the ways of God. I often followed them nearly two miles, and then returned praising God for this further instruction, picked up, as it were, by stealth, and meditating thereon all the way home." The members at last began to notice him: they sent a young man to inquire about him; they received him into their society, and soon found him to be one of the devoutest of their communion.

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[18] No Protestant records afford more astonishing examples of the *sortes sanctorum* than the Methodist writings of the last century, a fact somewhat attributable to the influence of Moravianism on the first years of Methodism. Olivers was delivered from several despondent plights, by this expedient, in the early days of his reformation. In an hour of nervous depression he began to speculate about his final salvation; the terrible "Quinquarticular Controversy" (in which he was afterward so great a master) got hold upon his troubled spirit, and he sunk in despair under the impression that he was a "reprobate." He thought of giving up prayer as useless to him. He seized his Bible, but threw it aside, lest he should open on some text confirmatory of his fear. Seizing it again, he cast his eye on the words, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." "But what struck me," he says, "above all, was those words in the following verse: 'I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.'" At another time, when sinking in similar anxiety, he opened the New Testament at the text, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end."

He now became a striking example of that sudden and entire restoration of the debased conscience, which distinguishes its mysterious nature from all the other susceptibilities of the soul. He was as scrupulous as he had been reckless. He could do no injustice, "not even to the value of a pin;" he could not mention the name of God but when it was necessary, and then with the deepest awe and reverence. His daily meals were received as a sacrament. As to his "thoughts, inclinations, and desires," his constant inquiry was, "Is this to the glory of God?" If not, he dare not indulge it.

In due time he was "exhorting," and at last preaching among the neighboring rustics; spending his Saturday nights, till one or two o'clock, in preparing his sermons; rising at five o'clock, walking twenty miles during the day, and returning so fatigued as to be hardly able to get over a stile. On one of these preaching excursions he was tempted to believe that he was running before he was sent, and turned back despondently. This may be a temptation of the devil, he said to himself; and, opening his Bible, cast his eye upon the passage, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." He took courage, and, turning about, went to his appointment. His renewed conscience troubled him about his old debts. "I felt," he writes, "as great confusion and sorrow as if I had actually stolen every sum I owed." Some money was due to him from the estate of his kindred, and he set out to receive it in order to pay his creditors. A notable journey was it; one that might have delighted the heart of the good Knight of La Mancha as he pored over his books of chivalry, in his library, before arming for his own memorable adventures. He preached in most of the Methodist societies on his route, and, when he arrived among his old neighbors, astonished them as much by his reformation as by his discourses. An uncle, a rich farmer, could not comprehend the marvel, and ascribed it to some terrible fright. "Thou hast been so wicked that thou hast seen the devil!" exclaimed the surprised yeoman.[19] A profligate nobleman of the parish had him seized on Sunday and sent to the stocks; but the men who took him thither, struck by the miracle of his reformation, and affected by his Christian spirit, only simulated the punishment, and stood with him "near the stocks the whole time, which was near two hours, talking about religion."

After paying all he owed in his native place, he purchased a horse, and rode from town to town, paying not only principal but interest, and astonishing his creditors with his religious exhortations. "You ought to thank God," he said, "for if he had not converted me I never should have thought of paying you." One of them he found in prison; he paid his debt, and preached to the prisoners in their chapel. He went to Whitehurst to pay a sixpence; for no sin seemed small to him now. From Fordham to Shrewsbury, to Whitehurst, to Wrexham, to Chester, to Liverpool, to Manchester, to Birmingham, to Bristol, he rode on this singular pilgrimage, paying his debts and preaching the Gospel. He paid about seventy; and, before he got through the list, had to sell horse, saddle, and bridle for the purpose.

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[19] Coleridge makes a characteristic note on the rustic's remark: "There is a sort of wild philosophy in this popular notion. See Friend, vol. iii, p. 71 (p. 56, 3d edition.) What we have within, that only can we see without. *Δαίμονας εἴδει οὐδείς εἰ μή ὁ δαμονοειδής.*"

Of course Wesley's keen discernment would appreciate such a man. He sent him to a circuit among the miners of Cornwall; but as he now had no money for another horse, he set out, October 24, 1753, on foot, with his saddle-bags, containing books and linen, across his shoulder. A layman on the circuit offered to pay for a horse if he would buy one. He obtained a colt, which, says Southey, "was as well suited to him as Bucephalus to Alexander, for he was as tough and indefatigable as his master." "I have kept him," wrote Olivers, twenty-five years afterward, "to this day; and on him I have traveled comfortably not less than a hundred thousand miles."

He encountered some of those "fights of affliction" with rioters, which were common to his brethren of that day. At North Bolton a noted ruffian interrupted the worship, and led the rabble after him through the streets, "throwing whatever first came to hand." In Cornwall the high-constable came to impress him for the army while he was preaching, but, staying to hear the sermon, thought better of him, and allowed him to go on his way. At Yarmouth he found good advantage in his young Bucephalus amid a frightful mob, which had sworn that any Methodist preacher, who should enter their town, should die there. The menace could only challenge such a man as Olivers to go. He was accompanied by a timid friend, who expected to suffer martyrdom with him, and who was terribly dismayed with the fear that he was not prepared for it. Olivers got him into the town, however, and began to sing a hymn in the market-place. The rabble soon rallied, and commenced their assault; but a bold townsman rescued the itinerant and sheltered him in a house. He sent for his horse, which was brought down an alley; the mob thronging in after it. Olivers, mounting it, charged upon them, driving them, pell-mell, before him. "But," he says, "the women stood in their doors, some with both hands full of dirt, and others with bowls of water, which they threw at me as I passed by. When we got into the open street we had such a shower of stones, sticks, apples, turnips, and potatoes as I have never seen before or since." His fellow-traveler galloped out of town as fast as he was able; but the evangelist, more cool and courageous, watched the motions of the sticks and stones which were likely to hit him, so as to preserve "a regular retreat." "When I overtook my companion," he says, "we were thankful that we escaped with our lives as were our friends in Norwich on seeing us return." The scene was characteristic of the times as well as of the man.

For forty-six years did Thomas Olivers belong to Wesley's unconquerable itinerant corps, doing valiant service, and enduring severe hardships in England, Scotland, and Ireland. But while the brave man was toiling through his humble work, his grand hymns were resounding in the great churches of the kingdom.[20]

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[20] American Methodist Hymn Book, Nos. 944–46. Dr. Jackson says that his Hymn of Praise to Christ was set to music by a gentleman in Ireland, and performed before the Bishop of Waterford, in his cathedral, on Christmas-day. Belcher, in his Historical Sketches of Hymns, says that "the eclebrated Mrs. Carter heard Olivers' hymn,

'Lo! he comes with clouds descending,'

sung at St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, as an Advent Anthem, and gives it at full length in her 'Letters.'" Creamer, in his Hymnology, affirms that there is not in the language a hymn which has elicited more praise than his "God of Abraham;" and James Montgomery remarks, in his Christian Psalmist, that "there is not in our language a lyric of more majestic style, more elevated thought, or more glorious imagery. Its structure, indeed, is unattractive; and, on account of the short lines, occasionally uncouth; but, like a stately pile of architecture, severe and simple in design, it strikes less on the first view than after deliberate examination, when its proportions become more grace-

The latter part of his life was spent in London, where he superintended Wesley's press and preached incessantly. He says he never labored harder; but Wesley erred in subjecting such a man to the drudgery of the printing office. Though he had genius, and some literary ability, he was naturally unfit for this minute typographical work. He had too much genius for it; and the Arminian Magazine teemed with inaccuracies, which Wesley sometimes tried to mend by formidable tables of errata. He had at last to procure a substitute for him.

Thomas Olivers "the cobbler's"[21] participation in the long "Calvinistic controversy" procured him a reputation which still renders his name familiar in most of the Methodist world; his few great lyrics have given him a unique place on the catalogue of hymnists, and will never be allowed to die; but his self-redemption under the influence of religion is the most extraordinary part of his history. "Well," says Southey, "might this man, upon reviewing

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ful, its dimensions expand, and the mind itself grows greater in contemplating it." Blackwood's Magazine has pronounced it "one of the noblest odes in the English language." It was originally published in a pamphlet of eight pages, and entitled "An Hymn to the God of Abraham. In three parts. Adapted to a celebrated air sung by the priest, Signor Leoni, etc., at the Jews' Synagogue in London. By Thomas Olivers." Jackson says it reached its thirtieth edition as early as 1779. There are stanzas in this ode fit for archangels to sing; and if ever heaven borrows strains from earth, the "Welsh cobbler's" verses reverberate among the spheres, louder than any hymn of Milton, or Goethe's "Chorus in heaven."

[21] This sobriquet was given to him by Toplady, who represented Wesley as saying:

"I've Thomas Olivers, the cobbler,
(No stall in England holds a nobler,)
A wight of talents universal,
Whereof I'll give a brief rehearsal:
He with one brandish of his quill
Will knock down Toplady and Hill."

Belcher, in his Historical Sketches of Hymns, by a curious blunder, ascribes to Wesley the authorship of this doggerel, as a part of a humorous description of his compeers. Wesley was morally, if not intellectually, incapable of such a production.

his own eventful life, bless God for the manifold mercies which he had experienced, and look upon Methodism as the instrument of his deliverance from sin and death."

He was struck with paralysis in the morning, and was dead at the noon of the 7th of March, 1799.[22] He was worthily laid to rest in the tomb of Wesley, at City Road Chapel, London. Wherever the worship of God has extended, in the English language, his grand odes resound to-day in its temples; and wherever that language may yet extend, the Hebraic sublimity of his strains will rise above all ordinary hymns, like the sounds of trumpets and organs soaring above all other instruments of the choir. Such is the regal prerogative of genius, though it come before the world in the person of a "cobbler."

By the death of Alexander Mather, in 1800, fell a main pillar of the Wesleyan edifice. His eventful life has already been noticed at some length.[23] He was a chieftain of the cause through most of its early struggles, and during its late long controversy. His disinterestedness was shown in the fact that, though ordained by Wesley as a superintendent or bishop, and an advocate of the claim of the people for the sacraments, he made no attempt to secure any deference for his peculiar office, but even opposed the immediate adoption of Coke's episcopal scheme, as proposed at the Litchfield meeting. His brethren give him the longest notice hitherto inserted in their annual obituary. They say that he traveled in the Connection for forty-three years with great success; that he was a father to the preachers; that his ability of both mind and body for the hard work of the itineracy was extraordinary; that he rose every morning at four o'clock, and could work until nine at night without apparent fatigue, in duties which required the closest application; that he was instantly ready in debate, a perfect master of the doctrines and discipline of Methodism; that his wisdom and experience, his courage and perseverance, rendered his services in the late controversy invaluable;

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[22] Wes. Meth. Mag., 1845, p. 522.

[23] See vol. ii, b. 5, ch. 4.

and that his noble soul was elevated above the prejudices of parties. Severe, stern even, in his sense of right, he was noted for his tenderness for the guilty and the afflicted; he seemed to feel the sufferings of others as much as they were felt by themselves. His peculiar spirit of compassion is commemorated by the Conference in their Minutes, and it revealed itself amid the agonies of his death.

His last days were attended with extreme suffering, but with equal triumph; for, though his disease not only prostrated his body, but bowed his strong mind in deep dejection, it could not shake his religious assurance. Two of his fellow-veterans, Benson and Pawson, called to see him in the last struggle. "What I was there a witness to," says the former, "I shall never forget." They stood before him, for some time, in silence, and wept.[24] He addressed them in broken whispers, testifying his hope in Christ, in Christ alone, not from any labor or suffering or virtues of his own life. He proceeded to speak of the Connection "in a manner which showed how his soul was wrapped up in its prosperity;" he gave them many cautions and counsels, urging them especially to attend, at the Conference, to the state of the poor preachers, many of whom, he said, he knew to be in great want and distress. He was exhausted by these remarks. The visitors knelt to pray with him, for the last time, as they had reason to suppose; "but," writes Benson, "we could do little more than weep in silence, and give vent to our tears and sighs. We then bade him farewell."

In his extreme anguish he exclaimed: "I long to be gone! I long to be gone!" "I am happy in Jesus, but my sufferings are very great!" "O Jesus, whom I have long loved, whom I do love, in whom I delight, I surrender myself unto thee." Nearly the last words he uttered were: "I now know that I have not sought thee in vain; I have not—I have not—I have not! O thou that causedst light to shine out of darkness, shine upon my soul with the light of the knowledge of the Son of God. That name above every other name forever dear, it dispels all my fears. O proclaim, proclaim Jesus! Tell me, shall I be with him this night?" On being answered, "Yes, there is no doubt of it," he cried out, "He that I have served for near fifty years will not forsake me now. Glory be to God and the Lamb, forever and ever! Amen! amen! amen!" His voice failed; he seemed to sink into a tranquil slumber, and almost imperceptibly passed away. "Thus lived," said Benson, "and thus died, Alexander Mather; than whom, perhaps, no person has been more universally respected among us."

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[24] Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i, p. 414.

In 1802 Christopher Hopper, a man of similar character and influence, was added to the list of the eminent dead.[25] His brethren characterize him, in the Minutes, as an "aged veteran in the armies of Immanuel; one of the first Methodist preachers, and the oldest upon the list, at the time of his decease." They call him a Boanerges, a son of thunder, who preached often at the hazard of his life, among mobs, in private houses, barns, stables, on mountains, on plains, in streets and market-places, in cities, towns, and villages, wherever hearers could be found, and with such ability and success that "stout-hearted sinners trembled under the powerful and alarming message which the Lord gave him to deliver." They say that he feared the face of no man; that hundreds were converted to God by his instrumentality in different parts of the country; that during a ministry of fifty-seven years, forty of them in the itineracy, he was never charged with any misconduct; that he was pre-eminent for prudence and zeal, efficiency and integrity. He fell victoriously in the eightieth year of his age. He formed some of the first societies in the north, and was the first of Wesley's itinerants who penetrated into Scotland. He labored extensively in Ireland, and traveled most of the important circuits of England. It was fitting, therefore, that his funeral sermon should be preached from the text, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel."[26]

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[25] See accounts of him in vol. i, pp. 364,410; ii, p. 257.

Other veterans, and many in their young manhood, fell in the ministerial field within this period. Among them were Thomas Johnson, who spent forty-five years in the itineracy, a "living, zealous preacher, with a manner peculiar to himself," "much persecuted by cruel and unreasonable men," but "never shrinking from the cross of his Divine Master;"—Jasper Robinson, twenty-three years an evangelist, with unaffected simplicity of manners, mild, gentle, and having "his whole heart in the work of God," living and dying "a happy witness of full salvation;"—Thomas Brisco, "sensible, well read," a "man of many afflictions" from prolonged disease, brought on by damp beds and poor accommodations in the country parts of Ireland;—Robert Roberts, "a faithful minister more than forty years," "still mighty in the Scriptures, diligent in the work of the Lord, and benevolent in his temper, in old age, when his memory and voice were nearly gone;"—John Furz, "an aged servant of the Lord," who retained his piety and closed his life, in holy triumph, after he had sunk into physical and mental decay;—John Pool, who traveled thirty years, meek, patient, diffident, of "unblemished character," and "unshaken confidence in God" in death;—Thomas Carlile, "a faithful shepherd of the flock," who preached fifty, and traveled thirty-six years, and whose greatest fault seems to have been "an exuberance of facetious wit;"—Peard Dickinson, an ordained clergyman, whom we have seen laboring faithfully, and dying triumphantly;[27] "his last words," say the old Minutes, "were, 'Hark! do you not hear? They are come for me. I am ready, quite ready! Stop, say nothing but glory! glory!'"—John Peacock, who was in the ministry thirty-six years, and who died with "unspeakable composure and confidence in God;"—Thomas Kyte, "rather reserved," of deep piety, and who, after seventeen years of labor, died shouting, "Praise him! praise him! praise him!"—William Simpson, "a man of great simplicity and strict uprightness," who, when dying and unable to speak, was asked to lift his hand "if Jesus was precious" to him, and lifted both hands in "a triumphant manner and with holy joy;"—John Johnson, an intimate friend of Wesley, "an old and faithful servant of Jesus Christ," nearly fifty years on the Conference roll, and who, when reminded that he could look back on his useful life as a consolation, refused the comfort, and, though very weak, broke out with the exclamation: "I can look back on the time I was convinced that I was a lost sinner: I can look back with joy on the day when Mr. Whitefield preached from that text, 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,' when joy so overpowered me, that whether I was in the body or out of the body, I could not tell; and when I appear before my Saviour, I will cast my crown at his feet." And still others of similar lives and deaths.

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[26] The sermon (by Thomas Cooper) is in the Methodist Magazine for September 1803. It says that Hopper acquired a knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and was "a great man naturally."

[27] See vol. ii, b. 5, ch. 10.

As we take leave of such men, at their graves, the singular success of early Methodism continues, indeed, to be a marvel to us, but ceases to be a problem.

CHAPTER VI.

EXTRAORDINARY LABORERS AND SUCCESSES, 1797–1805.

Additions to the Ministry — Edward Hare — Jabez Bunting — His Early History — Mary Bunting — Bunting begins his Ministry — His great Public Services — His Character — Robert Newton — His Conversion — His Popularity and Character — Representative Men of Methodism in the new Century — Clarke, Watson, Bunting, and Newton — Their Example of Co-operation — Revivals of Religion — Adam Clarke — Cornwall — George Lowe on Howden Circuit — Bramwell — Coke — The Welsh Missions — Great Revival on Bradford Circuit — Extraordinary Characters — William Dawson, "the Yorkshire Farmer" — His Character, his Services, his Genius — Jonathan Saville — His Early Sufferings, his Usefulness as a Prayer-leader, Class-leader, and Local Preacher — Statistical Results.

Though many distinguished evangelists fell at their posts in the present period, a host of recruits entered the ministerial ranks, including some of pre-eminent ability. No less than two hundred and thirteen were received on probation by the Conference,[1] an average of more than twenty-six for each year.

Edward Hare's name appears, for the first time, on the roll in 1798. Early in his life he was apprenticed as a mariner, and served in the Mediterranean trade; on his return from a voyage he was converted among the Methodists.[2] He continued his seafaring life some time, preaching on shipboard and in ports. He was taken prisoner by the French; on being released he reached the coast of Cornwall, whence he walked three hundred and fifty miles to his home, but was so destitute that his food, on the way, was little else than bread and water. Benson discovered him and sent him to fill a vacancy on the York circuit; and, three years later, on the London circuit, was so impressed with his talents as to bestow special care on his education. He became "the ablest controversialist" of Methodism.[3] His intellect was comprehensive and subtle, and had a peculiar aptitude for polemics. His brethren of the Conference say that his mental and moral qualifications commanded general esteem; that nothing could abate the ardor of his mind, or induce him in the least to relax in his diligence, and that his intense and incessant application to study, and his extraordinary exertions in the pulpit, at last prostrated his health, and brought his career prematurely to an end in the twentieth year of his ministry.

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[1] This number is not an exact criterion, however, of the increase of the ministry, as candidates were sometimes "dropped" for want of qualification, or continued on probation beyond the usual time, or died before their probation ended.

[2] Minutes of 1818, p. 397.

In 1799 appeared, for the first time, in the list of probationers, two names which were to be associated with nearly every great event of Wesleyan Methodism during half a century.

In the Conference of 1769 John Wesley, as we have seen, said, "We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York; who is willing to go?" Joseph Pilmoor and Richard Boardman responded. Boardman, with money in his pocket contributed by the poor preachers for his voyage, set out, mourning the recent loss of his wife, but courageous for his new career. He preached as he journeyed toward Bristol to embark. In the Peak of Derbyshire he stopped for the night at the village of Monyash; inquiring if there were any Methodists there, he was sent to a humble cottage, where he was welcomed. As usual he preached in the evening. He was there to achieve greater usefulness, perhaps, than by all his labors in founding Methodism in the New World. In the rustic assembly sat a young woman, Mary Redfern, listening eagerly for words of consolation from the traveler. She was poor, but rich in the traits of her intellect and character. She had the care of a hopelessly infirm mother, and had been the nurse and guardian of eight younger children of the family. Her attention had "been awakened to religious subjects, not by hearing, but seeing "a strange man standing in the streets of the village, and preaching repentance to the people." Under the sermon of Boardman, the divine light dawned more fully upon her inquiring mind, and soon afterward she received the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." Boardman's text was: "Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested." 1 Chron. iv, 9, 10. The occasion was too memorable to the young hearer ever to be forgotten, and the text was embalmed in her heart. She was persecuted, especially by her father; she walked thirty miles to Manchester to escape her trials, which at one time endangered her life,[4] but returned, after reflection, to bear them patiently while her afflicted mother should live. She subsequently became a servant in a Methodist family in that city; where also, nearly ten years after Boardman's sermon, she married William Bunting, a Methodist layman; and the next year (1779) selected from the text of Boardman a name for her first-born child—Jabez Bunting—a memento of her gratitude and a prophecy of his history.[5]

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[3] Bunting's Life, i, 14.

She lived to see him rapidly advancing in the career in which he became the most effective successor of Wesley and a prince among the leaders of British Protestantism.

Her diligent care of his religious education led him early to a devout life. She presented him to the aged Wesley, for his blessing, in the Oldham Chapel at Manchester. The history of Methodism shows that the patriarch's benediction was a bequest of his own mantle to the child. She constantly conducted him to the meetings of her Methodist associates; but under the pastoral administrations of Mather, who was a rigid disciplinarian, the rule, that none but members of the society should be admitted to the love-feasts, was enforced, and young Bunting was therefore left at home, but was solemnly reminded by his mother that after having been carried so often to these spiritual festivals, he was now excluded by his own fault. He was struck by the remark, and retired to his chamber to pray. It was a crisis in his life. Soon afterward, while standing in meditation and prayer at the door of his home, he "ventured himself on Christ, and was consciously pardoned and accepted." Later in life he remarked in public that "many attribute their conversion to having attended a love-feast, but I owe mine to having been shut out of one;" and after referring to his obligations to Methodism, at a centenary meeting in London, he said: "You see I have to thank God for Methodist discipline as well as Methodist doctrine."

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[4] Rev. Dr. Jobson's Tribute to the Memory of Rev. Jabez Bunting, D.D., p. 48. London, 1858.

[5] Bunting's Life of Bunting, chap. 1.

With James Wood, a fellow-youth, "dear to him as his own soul," and afterward, for more than half a century, an eminent Wesleyan layman, he was received into the Methodist society, in Manchester, in the autumn of 1794.[6] It is recorded, as a curious coincidence, that his first "Society ticket" bore a motto from the prayer of Jabez: "O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and keep me from evil." His piety now prompted his naturally superior faculties; he became the "head scholar" of his school. A physician, eminent for his professional and literary abilities, chose him as a pupil and an inmate of his family. He advanced rapidly in his mental culture, and it was evident that the highest intellectual success was at his command. He chose, however, to abandon all ordinary ambition, and to give himself to the Methodist itinerant ministry, as the grandest field for a life which, aiming at the greatest usefulness here, should secure the greatest blessedness hereafter. He became a prayer leader. On a Sunday, in 1798, he stood up at the door of a mechanic, in "Cross Lane," and addressed his first public exhortation to the people in the street. A few months later he delivered his first sermon, as a local preacher, in a cottage, at a demoralized village called Sodom. His friend Wood declared, more than half a century afterward, when Bunting was known throughout the realm, that he never excelled this first discourse.

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[6] Jobson, p. 54.

His popularity was immediate, and in August, 1799, having been received by the Conference, he set out on foot, with his saddle-bags on his shoulder, for his first circuit appointment at Oldham. He was accompanied some distance by his uncle, an aged Methodist, who had been his class-leader; at parting they knelt down by the road side and the old man, whose "heart was full," implored God's blessing upon the young evangelist.

Such was the beginning of Jabez Bunting's ministry. His subsequent history is that of Wesleyan Methodism for nearly sixty years. He was appointed from one to another of the most important circuits, Oldham, Macclesfield, London Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Halifax, and Leeds successively. Though he became one of the oldest preachers in the Connection, his regular appointments were limited to eight places, and they were the most important in England. He spent eight years, with intermissions, in Manchester; five in Liverpool; about thirty-three in various positions in London. His appointments, made not by his own agency, but voluntarily by his brethren, show more, perhaps, than does the case of any other man in the history of Methodism, the predominating power of real greatness, its power to concentrate about itself the requisite conditions of success, and to reinstate itself spontaneously and continuously in such conditions. He became the recognized legislative leader of the Connection. Its most important measures were either conceived, or chiefly effected, by his unrivaled ability and influence. Beyond his own Church he was a commanding guide of many of those great religious interests which have been common to the Protestant denominations of England. An eminent divine of another communion said at his grave: "The wisdom of his suggestions, his counsel, and his advice, was soon perceived and felt; and ever after, when he rose, all was hushed to silence. Often, when we found ourselves involved in perplexity, the sound of his voice was heard, and came like light upon the thicket, showing us the way out, and leading us to the proper result. In the extent of his information, the comprehensiveness of his views, the conclusiveness of his reasoning, and, I will add, in the urbanity of his manner, I never saw his equal, and I never expect to."[7]

He was the first man elected, by nomination, to the "Legal Hundred" who constitute the annual Conference. He was chosen to their secretaryship ten times, and was the first who was appointed to that office after Coke, who had so long filled it, sailed for India. He was elected president of the body four times; oftener than any other man except his great compeer, Robert Newton, who this year entered with him the itinerant ministry. He early offered himself to the Conference as a missionary, but his brethren wisely prevented him from going abroad, that he might do a larger work for missions at home. On the death of Coke he became the chief representative of the Wesleyan missions, and to him "more than to any other man, they owe their prominence and precedence among the great Protestant enterprises of Christendom." He was capable of success in literature, and had projected important literary plans. When the alternative was presented of sacrificing forever this seductive pursuit, or of losing the opportunity of the more practical usefulness and practical drudgery of the missionary secretaryship, he wrote: "The die is cast! If I give to our missions the attention they require, I shall not have hereafter any time for literature."[8] While on the London circuit he was the senior Missionary Secretary and editor of the Book Room; and at the death of Watson he took charge of the secretaryship again, and sustained its onerous labors for eighteen years. He was president of the Theological Institution, for the education of the ministry, from its commencement till his death. He had witnessed much of the seven years' struggle of Methodism, after the death of Wesley, and the lessons of that great controversy doubtless influenced his course as an ecclesiastical legislator. If it afforded no other advantage, this was no small compensation to the Connection for that protracted trial. Bunting's policy was soundly conservative, but also progressive. He was the first to introduce laymen into the management of the missionary affairs of the Church, and also into the District Meetings.[9] For this measure he contended with much opposition from his elder ministerial brethren; but he persisted, and advocated so urgently the co-operation of laymen in all the Connectional committees which involved financial interests, that it at last became a conceded principle of Wesleyan Methodism that they should share, equally with the preachers, in such business. A high Methodist authority affirms that he did "more to engage lay agency in the Connection, and therefore to extend the influence of laymen in it, than any other man of his age."[10] As a debater he was without a rival among his brethren. He was chary of his remarks in Conference sessions, well knowing that frequent and unimportant speeches there are a sure forfeiture of influence, as well as a vexatious embarrassment of business. He seldom spoke over five minutes at a time, and then after most others were through, and for the purpose of concentrating the dispersed or bewildered thoughts of the body, of allaying exasperated feelings, or of clinching the subject by some summary and conclusive argument. When, however, occasion required it, he could enter the arena completely armed, and fight the combat out, almost invariably with victory.

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[7] Dr. Leifchild: Jobson's Tribute, p. 84.

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[8] A sermon, of masterly ability, on "Justification by Faith," a Funeral Sermon on Richard Watson, a discourse on Sunday-Schools, and an occasional obituary paper on some of his fellow-laborers, are all the published productions of his pen.

[9] Jobson's Tribute, p. 67.

[10] Jackson's Life of Robert Newton, chap. 4.

Well-balanced faculties, a penetrating sagacity, an almost intuitive perception of the adaptation of means to ends, dexterity in reconciling dissonant minds by winning them not so much to each other's opinions as to his own wiser or more moderate convictions; self-control, securing that tone of repose which usually characterizes the highest class of intellects; a happy art of tranquillizing ruffled passions in debate, and of diffusing an amicable spirit among disputants, often making them smile at the folly of their own violence; an effective, but rare use of sarcasm; a style singularly lucid and terse; a readiness of reply, never found wanting; a versatile capacity for work as well as for counsel; a practical habit of mind in all things, brushing aside, perhaps too much, imagination and sentiment, were traits which he not only combined, but in any one of which he has seldom been equaled.

His preaching was methodical, perspicuous, rich in scriptural citation, usually more logical than eloquent, but sometimes overwhelmingly powerful, producing visible effect, so "that large numbers together were cut to the heart, and cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" He was robust, and dignified in stature, with calm features, a noble brow, a clear, sonorous voice. His gestures were few, and as simple as possible; he stood erect in the pulpit, was never hurried, and never lacked the appropriate word. A good judge, who heard him often, said, "other preachers excelled him in some points, but none that I have ever heard has equaled him as a whole."[11] Adam Clarke excelled him in learning, Newton in popular eloquence, Watson in theological analysis and sublime and speculative thought: but he surpassed them all in counsel, in administrative talents, in varied practical ability. They, in common with all his brethren, spontaneously conceded to him supremacy in the leadership of their common cause.

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[11] Letter of Dr. Leifchild, in Life of Bunting, i, 10.

Robert Newton was born September 8, 1780, at Roxby, a village on the sea-coast, in Yorkshire. His parents were a simple, honest couple, living by agricultural labors. They read good John Nelson's Journal, and were led by it to adopt his views of religion. They sent for the nearest Methodist itinerants, and opened their cottage for preaching. They became devoted Methodists, and the zealous farmer hired a room in a degraded hamlet, two miles distant, where there was no place of worship, and induced the itinerants to preach in it regularly, he himself becoming its class-leader. His house was blessed like that of Obed-edom; all his eight children joined the Wesleyan Society, and four of his sons became noted for their ability and usefulness as preachers; Robert being the most effectively popular preacher of Methodism since the days of Whitefield.

About the time that the seven years' controversy was culminating an extraordinary revival of religion prevailed in many places.[12] It seemed, indeed, that the great Head of the Church was crowning the patient fidelity of the ministry with a spiritual triumph which should dispel its last fears, and compensate for its long struggle. Robert Newton was, perhaps, the noblest trophy of this triumph. More than four hundred persons were converted on the Whitby circuit, which included his native town; penitent crowds flocked to the new places of worship, and he and a sister, ever after inexpressibly dear to him, went weeping with them. He was in great mental anguish, wishing sometimes even for death, during nine weeks; but while kneeling by the side of his sister, in prayer, in a room of their father's house, they both received the remission of sins, and their sorrow was turned into joy. In the year 1798 he preached his first sermon, on the text "We preach Christ crucified," in a cottage at Lyth. A Methodist chapel stands on the site of the house, with its pulpit over the spot where the young preacher stood, with a chair before him, to deliver the first of those eloquent proclamations of the truth, which, for more than half a century, moved the masses of the English people.

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[12] Jackson's Life of Robert Newton, chap. 1.

He was now placed on the Local Preacher's Plan, and in 1799 was received on probation by the Conference. His success was immediate, and his audiences were thenceforward crowds. He was tall and well-proportioned, with a "large front, and eye sublime," a man "fit to stand before kings." His voice was a deep musical bass, incomparable in the variety and sweetness of its modulations. His manner in the pulpit was neither declamatory nor too colloquial, but subdued, solemn, and irresistibly impressive. Out of the desk, as well as in it, he seemed anointed with a divine unction, so that one of his fellow-laborers, who heard him in these early years, and who was converted under his ministrations, says that veneration was everywhere felt for his character, that it was "next to impossible to spend any time in conversation with him without perceiving that his intercourse with God was intimate and sanctifying, that he dwelt in God, and God in him; and the principle of the divine life so filled and pervaded his mind as to give to his whole demeanor an air of sanctity which it is difficult to describe.[13]

With such a spirit and such ability, his ministrations could not fail to be effective; if they produced not usually what are called "revivals," they were continually attended by the conversion of individual hearers; they added not a few useful men to the ministry; they built up the societies, and left a deep and general impression on the communities where he labored. In various parts of England and Scotland he was greatly successful during our present period; in Sheffield, especially, it is said he broke the spell of Paine's infidel opinions which prevailed among the working classes, not only reclaiming many bold blasphemers, but turning the tide of public opinion in favor of genuine religion.

[13] Rev. William Smith. Jackson's Life of Newton, chap. 4.

He was a diligent student. His sermons were mostly written, but delivered without the manuscript; on the platform, however, he was as successful as in the pulpit, though his speeches were there evidently extemporaneous. Their casual allusions were frequent, and often most felicitous. His language was always so simple as to be intelligible to the rudest peasant, and so correct and pertinent as to delight the most fastidious scholar. An indescribable natural grace marked both his thoughts and his manners. His self-possession was perfect, giving him complete command of his audience and of his faculties. His hearers felt that his discourses were tasks of perfect facility to himself, and yet inimitable by others.

His first appointment to London was an epoch in his career. Butterworth was one of his heartiest friends there, and being a chief manager of the British and Foreign Bible Society, urged him into its service on the platform; his unrivaled talent for popular speeches was soon appreciated, and thenceforward he was the representative Methodist orator, on similar occasions, throughout the nation. While in in the metropolis he also co-operated with Coke, in behalf of missions, and caught the infectious zeal of that tireless man. During the rest of his life Robert Newton was the most popular advocate of missions in England. He disclaimed any talent for the details of business; he devolved these upon Bunting, Watson, and their colleagues, and reluctantly though faithfully, sat in missionary and other committees; but, abroad among the people, he was without a compeer in the great cause. When he commenced his public labors for it, there were but fifty Wesleyan missionaries, with about seventeen thousand communicants under their care; he saw them increased to more than three hundred and fifty missionaries and one hundred thousand communicants.

The demand for his services at missionary anniversaries, at the opening of new chapels, and on other extraordinary occasions, became almost universal in England, Scotland, and Ireland. His election four times to the presidency of the Conference gave him facilities for such labors. But, when he was appointed to circuits, it became necessary to provide for him, from year to year, to the end of his life, the services of a young preacher, who could fill his week-night appointments and attend to his local pastoral work, relieving him to traverse the country. Seventeen of his interlined almanacs are extant, with scarcely a week-day unmarked by a special sermon or speech, except Saturday, when he usually returned for the Sunday services of his own circuit. Perhaps no man of his day was better known to the drivers and guards of the stage coaches on the highways of England. During forty years he was as nearly omnipresent in the United Kingdom, as it was possible for a human being to be, and it has been estimated that he addressed, from year to year, a greater number of people than any other contemporary man. An excursion by him into an agricultural district, to preach at an anniversary or a chapel dedication, created a sort of jubilee. "The surrounding country," we are told, "was in motion. Along the roads were seen farmers with their wives and daughters in gigs, market-carts, and other vehicles of less pretension; gray-headed men, each supported by his staff; laboring men in their Sunday clothing, and poor women in their cloaks and plain bonnets; young people, whose countenances told of health and of godly cheerfulness, all wending their way to hear the far-famed 'Robert Newton,' and every one bringing some pecuniary contribution toward the advancement of the good cause. In these cases the windows of the chapels, where he preached, were usually wide open, and the places crowded to suffocation. When he visited London, Dublin, and Edinburgh, he was always attended by eager multitudes, among whom were usually persons of distinction. For forty years he was familiarly known in nearly all the cities and large provincial towns of England; and with scarcely any exceptions, his visits, to the end of his life, were hailed with undiminished pleasure by the people.

One cause of his popularity doubtless was his very agreeable manner, and his matchless voice; but the principal charm of his preaching was unquestionably to be found in his spirit, and the evangelical character of his sermons. The Gospel, as it was expounded and proclaimed by him, presented a rich supply for every spiritual want, a healing balm for every wound and malady, an antidote to every grief and fear. The rich and the poor, the aged and the young, miners, manufacturers, artisans, agriculturists, men of science, and men without any education but that of rude nature, were all alike interested in his preaching; for i was an unmistakable echo of the prophetic exhortation 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye.'" He doubtless had faults, which he mourned before God in secret; but what they were, his biographer says he was never able to discover during an acquaintance of more than half a century. A more pure and spotless character he declares he never knew.[14]

With the providential advent of such men as Watson, Bunting, and Newton, in the Connection, about the period of its greatest trial, Methodism could not but assume a new attitude of strength and hope. Thenceforward it was more than ever to go on "from conquering to conquer." Not only the great talents of its leaders, but their profound piety, gave new confidence to the body. In these, and similar men, rising up around them, it was seen that the primitive spirit of the movement was to survive, with new abilities for new adaptations, by which it was to reach classes of the community to which it had hitherto but little access, to take its stand in the front of the Protestantism of the country, and to project its power into most of the ends of the world.

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[14] Jackson's Life of Newton, chap. 18. After nearly fifty-five years of labor, Robert Newton died in 1854, in his seventy-fourth year. His end befitted his great career. His last words were, "Christ Jesus the Saviour of sinners and the life of the dead! I am going, going, going to glory! Farewell sin! farewell death! praise the Lord!"

Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, Jabez Bunting, and Robert Newton were to be the exponent men of English Methodism during most of the first half of the new century. Their prominence and talents, without equal piety, might have been attended with perilous liabilities to the body. Its peculiar organization, its annual elective presidency, its frequent change of ministerial appointments, giving the amplest popular sway to talent, and its many new questions and enterprises, afforded dangerous opportunities for ambition and rivalry. What, asks the biographer of one of these great men, would have been the consequence had they been partisan competitors?[15] But model men were they, for all ecclesiastical leaders. Excepting a temporary dispute between Clarke and Watson, on the theological question of the "Eternal Sonship," no example, it need not be said of discord, but of important dissent, was ever set by them before the people. They loved Methodism as they loved their own souls, for to them it was the purest expression of the Gospel itself; they saw the necessity of brotherly harmony, between themselves, in order to maintain it among the people; they saw that it would be a fearful sin for them to fall out by the way while the gaze of millions was upon them.[16]

No men in the Connection traveled, preached, or labored harder than they, for their common cause. More than any other individual men of the Conference, they wrought out the great mission of that cause. They founded its modern missionary organization, and left it the greatest institution of the kind in the Protestant world. They founded nearly all its educational establishments. They formed most of its funds for the preachers, for chapel building, and for the poor. They worked together in these, and other interests, as one man. The biography of each of them has been written, and each narrative is almost an identical history of the same great enterprises. These four men stood, hand in hand, together in every great trial and every great victory of Methodism during their long lives. They were often seen on the same missionary platforms, from London to Edinburgh. Their good sense led them generally to coalesce on the same measures, in committees or in the Conference, especially when they saw the probability of discord among their brethren, from differences among themselves.

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[15] Jackson's Life of Newton.

[16] The dispute on the "Eternal Sonship," being a theological question, was a grave affair. Several preachers engaged in it with their pens, but their mutual affection was not seriously impaired by it. Entwisle, while at the Conference of 1820, wrote: "I felt unspeakable pleasure on that and many other occasions, in the perfect harmony and love between Dr Clarke and Messrs. Moore, Bunting, Watson, Marsden, myself, and others, who from a sense of duty have written and spoken against the Doctor's views of the Eternal Sonship. The love that prevails is delightful."

In their commanding superiority they were modest men, for modesty and merit not only form a good alliteration but express inseparably related qualities. The most popular of the four, Robert Newton, resisted the highest honors of the Conference, and when he was at last forced, by the votes of that body, into its presidency, he had to be literally dragged by his brethren to the chair. After the death of Clarke and Watson, Bunting and Newton remained the two chief men, but not two chief rivals, of English Methodism. Had they shown themselves mutually jealous, ambitious of precedence, leaders of parties, a disastrous influence must their example have had on the ministry and the people. But the reverse was the case. Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton were like David and Jonathan; no other two men of Wesleyan Methodism were personally more attached friends, and no two ministerial families were more cordially intimate than theirs.

While these eminent men were models of brotherly fellowship, and energetic labor for the common cause, they illustrated, as we have seen, somewhat distinct lines of example, in other respects, which are well worthy of imitation by their ablest successors: Bunting devoting himself especially to counsel, and his brethren thankfully recognizing his success in this direction; Newton feeling himself to be a man of action, and becoming the greatest evangelical itinerant in the world since Wesley, Asbury, and Coke; Clarke and Watson, while indefatigable in other labors, devoting themselves to the preparation of an advanced literature for the Connection, the one in Biblical exegesis, the other in theology; but, meanwhile, all of them being continually before the public in behalf of the great common interests of the denomination.

Nothing was more characteristic of these leaders than their profound personal piety. Bunting was great in all respects, but perhaps his greatest power was in prayer. His public prayers are better remembered to-day, in England, than his public discourses. Newton was irresistible in his spiritual power. Watson was even severe in his personal piety, "crucified" unto the world. Clarke was a child in his humble simplicity; his buoyant religious joyousness shone about him; never did a man love Methodism, in its essential characteristics, more than he; he would have been an exultant martyr for it. What an impression has the example as well as the talents of these giant men left upon Methodism, and indeed upon the English world! What would that impression be, had they been wrangling competitors, self-seekers, official plotters and counterplotters? They would have demoralized their cause, and left it an ecclesiastical scandal in their country.

Other historical men entered the ministry in the present period: Joshua Marsden, since familiar to the Church by his hymns, by his missionary labors in Nova Scotia, Bermuda, and the West Indies, and by his long services at home; Daniel Isaac, the "polemic divine;" Thomas Jackson, who survives after more than half a century of distinguished services to the literature and ministerial education of Methodism; Gideon Ouseley, and other heroic evangelists in Ireland, hereafter to be more fully noticed.

We are not surprised by the fact that extensive "revivals" prevailed under the favorable auspices of these times. Clarke labored on the Bristol, Liverpool, and Manchester circuits, preparing volume after volume for the press, preaching with simplicity and power to crowds of the common people who followed him from chapel to chapel, and attracting the respectful attention of the higher classes to his denomination. His Bristol circuit included Kingswood, and he still delighted to visit its reclaimed colliers; he extended his labors into neglected neighboring places, and soon witnessed such scenes as attended the original preaching of Wesley in other parts of this degraded region. He made occasional excursions to London, Cornwall, and other districts of the country, preaching continually to multitudinous assemblies, and building up the societies which had been more or less shaken by the late controversies. A flame of religious excitement was kindled in the West of England, which spread from appointment to appointment. At Penzance, Zenor, Hoyle, St. Just, and other towns, the societies were greatly recruited. Prayer-meetings were held by the miners in the depths of the earth. On the Penzance circuit more than two thousand souls were added to the classes in the course of a year.[17] George Lowe, distinguished by his usefulness as a preacher, had great success on Howden circuit. A company of young men met at one of his chapels to amuse themselves by disturbing the worship; he rose and proclaimed his text: "Now consider this all ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver." His word subdued the disturbers; some of them wept; their leader was awakened, and before the meeting closed was on his knees in the midst of the rejoicing society. He afterward joined it and became an itinerant preacher.[18] A profound religious interest spread from town to town on the circuit. "The word of God seemed to be irresistible," conversions occurred to the number of five or six under single sermons, and a large region of country was pervaded by the reforming influence. Bramwell, who could find rest only in labor, was indefatigable during this period. Kilham's secession had devastated some of the societies on Nottingham circuit. They had lost a chapel and three hundred members in that town. A new edifice was erected in 1798, and Bramwell's ministrations the next year repaired the entire loss of members. The revival extended greatly during the year 1799. A local preacher who shared in it writes that it "broke out at Sheffield and Nottingham about the same time At several of our meetings, the outpouring of the Spirit was so manifest that a whole assembly has been powerfully affected at once. Such glorious displays of the Lord's omnipotent power, and of his willingness to save perishing sinners, I believe will never be forgotten by hundreds who then partook of the divine blessing. It seemed as if the Lord was about to 'sweep the nations and shake the earth, till all proclaimed him God.'"[19] Hearers fell like dead men from their seats, "a great concern for religion discovered itself among all ranks," and several victims of Paine's infidelity were reclaimed. The distracted societies "were united and edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." The increase of the members, during the two years of Bramwell's appointment, was about one thousand, and the circuit was afterward divided into three. Wherever this good man was sent during the present period, more or less conversions crowned his labors, notwithstanding many trials from the late disturbed state of the Connection, and from other causes.

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[17] Life of Braithwaite, by Robert Dickinson, p. 322. London, 1825

[18] He was Rev. John Lancaster, author of the Life of Lady Maxwell. Smith's Hist. II, 5, 2. Life of Rev. Geo. Lowe, p. 244.

In 1801 Leeds, late the scene of great strifes from the Kilham schism, was pervaded by a religious awakening under the ministrations of Reece, Bramwell, and Barber. An eyewitness reports that "five classes met in High-street, St. Peter's, and the number of members added to them was very great. It appeared as though all the inhabitants of the place would soon be converted to God. Their minds were so much affected that those who had been the most profligate ceased to persecute, and many of them began to pray." Nearly four hundred converts were gathered into the wasted societies in the course of the year.

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[19] Bramwell's Mem., chap. 9.

Coke was more than ever active during these years in England, Ireland, the American Republic, and the West Indies. He procured from the government important legal reliefs for the missionaries in the latter. He projected the Irish Missions, already noticed; obtained for them the protection of the military authorities during the memorable Irish Rebellion; and Ouseley and Graham were abroad, successfully preaching on the highways and in the market-places. He founded the Welsh Missions, and, in 1802, six evangelists were traversing the Principality with great success. Owen Davies wrote to him, early in 1803, that "the Gospel has reached them, not in word, but in power. Real conversions daily take place among us. Three hundred and fifty have been added this quarter. Our congregations are large, and the Lord gives us favor in the sight of the people. At Abergele we have a hopeful society, and have purchased ground to build a chapel. At Conway our friends have made an old building into a very good preaching house. At Caernarvon they have converted the playhouse into a chapel." In a brief time their forty-five Church members increased to nearly one thousand. Their congregations were so large that they were compelled to preach in the open air, even in the stormy winters of the Cambrian Mountains, the people continuing on the spot as still as night, while the snow beat vehemently upon them.

In various parts of the kingdom were revivals frequent during the remaining years of this period; and the year 1805 closed with what a historian of Methodism records as one of the most remarkable of such outpourings of the Spirit, on the Bradford circuit.[20] "So extensively was the power of this heavenly influence diffused," says another authority,[21] writing more than thirty years later, "that to this day the whole stands forth as one of the most extraordinary and salutary visitations ever witnessed in the Bradford circuit." For some months scarcely a sermon was preached without immediate conversions. The doors of the chapel for ten or twelve weeks were hardly ever closed day or night, one party of worshipers frequently waiting without till those who were within had finished the appointed hour of service. The regular preaching was necessarily almost laid aside during these three months, for hardly could a discourse be begun than it was interrupted by the sobs and prayers of awakened souls, and preaching had to give place to intercession. Love-feasts were held in the open air, as no chapel could accommodate the multitudes which flocked from the neighboring circuits. Two devoted laymen were supported, by the society, that they might go about comforting and counseling the inquiring people, and holding meetings among them. More than three hundred awakened youths were combined in Methodist classes; the interest, however, extended to nearly all ages and ranks, and above nine hundred persons were received on trial in the societies during the year.

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[20] Smith, II, 5, 4.

[21] Stamp's Hist. Notices o. Methodism in Bradford, p. 85. London, 1841.

Some of those notable laborers, in humble life, which have distinguished the whole course of Methodism, were active during this period, and contributed not a little to its prosperous results. Unique in genius and of extraordinary usefulness, they have been so characteristic of the denomination, so illustrative of its spirit and success, that no history of it can be complete without a record of their services.

William Dawson is known throughout the Methodist world as much by his piety and usefulness as by his eccentricities. He was one of the best examples of Yorkshire Methodistic character. A farmer, local preacher, and general missionary advocate; shrewd with natural insight; intelligent, without much education; apt of speech, a talent which was the more effective, in popular assemblies, for his native dialect; eccentric, but equally relevant in thought; given to allegory and the oddest illustrations of his discourses, to an irrepressible but kindly humor, which he lamented as his "besetment and plague," but which, if it was a fault, was apparently the worst one he had; strong in his manhood, tender and gentle as womanhood, simple and confiding as childhood; apostolic in his faith and life; a poetic orator in rustic guise—such was William Dawson. He "displayed a force of genius and command of striking illustrations such as I scarcely ever heard," says a good judge, belonging to another communion, who also applies to him the remark of the poet, that "nature made him and then broke up the mould."[19] With his intellectual and moral traits he combined not a few personal advantages; he was nearly six feet high, and strongly framed; he had a noble forehead, an eye "keen and full of fire," and features large but expressive of "thought, brilliant, active, and penetrating." Such was the power of his genius and the extent of his public services that, though he was not a member of the Conference, and therefore not recorded in its obituary, that body honored him, at his death, in its Annual Address to its Societies. "No man," it said, "was ever more extensively known in the Wesleyan Connection, or more highly esteemed wherever known." Such was the admiring and grateful regard of the common people for him, that his funeral procession was like a triumphal march. Some of the factories in the town suspended their labors that their operatives might follow him to the grave. As he was borne through Leeds the streets "presented, for the space of about a mile and a half, one congregated mass of people." He was carried seven miles to his family burial place; procession met procession in the towns on the route, a hundred men on horseback, nearly a hundred carriages, with a vast multitude on foot, singing hymns on the highway while they bore him along. It was the spontaneous tribute of the grateful people who had for years been benefited by his rare talents and unblemished example. Their Methodist ancestors had borne brave John Nelson to the tomb, in a similar manner, in the early day of trial; the old battle-field over which they now bore Dawson was waving with such a moral harvest as Methodism had produced nowhere else in the world.

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[19] Rev. John Angell James, cited in Everett's Mem. of William Dawson, chap. 16. London, 1842.

William Dawson became a local preacher in the year 1801. He was then about twenty-seven years of age. He was born of humble but upright parents, who trained him strictly in religion. Early in life his thoughtful mind dwelt with anxiety on the subject. He often walked in the fields meditating upon it. Hearing the song of a bird in the hedge, he said to himself, "Here is a little bird happy, and I—I—possessed of an immortal spirit, born for heaven, cared for by a watchful Providence, fed, sheltered, protected, redeemed, with salvation within reach, and the very heaven for which I was born offered, am yet unhappy!" In 1791, while kneeling at the sacramental altar and hearing the words, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee," he "was overwhelmed with a sense of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, and the love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him." For some subsequent years his strong "Church principles" kept him from much intercourse with the Methodists; but in 1795 he heard Benson, at Seacroft, and his prejudices were thoroughly shaken. "His word," said Dawson, was "irresistible. I knew what religion was, and had the evidence of it in my heart; but there was a power in it at Seacroft to which I had not been accustomed. I wept, wiped off the tear, felt ashamed; wept, and wept again; struggled with my feelings, and strove to repress them. At length I said to myself, 'Let it come;' so saying I laid my head on the front of the gallery, and let the tears *hail* their way to the bottom of the chapel. No man ever took the hold of me that Mr. Benson did; and his preaching produced the same overwhelming effect wherever I heard him."

He began to exhort, and at last ventured to expound the Scriptures in school-rooms, cottages, barns, and some times in the mines, with the sanction of his parish curate, who encouraged him to prepare for holy orders; but Methodism alone afforded a suitable field for the labors of such a man, and after many delays and much reasoning, he so far subdued his "Church" predilections as to join a Wesleyan class, and at last joined the ranks of the local ministry. He was immediately popular, especially among the colliers and yeomen, some of them following him many miles from town to town. He not only preached in the churches of his own circuit, but was called to other parts of the country to make collections in behalf of Sunday-schools, indebted chapels, missions, and other claims; and few men could be more successful on such occasions. His congregations were frequently so large that he was compelled to preach in the open air. He was an exception to the proverb that "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country," for during the forty years of his ministerial labors his influence at Barwick, where he resided, was undiminished. When disappointed of a preacher, he would ascend the pulpit, stroke his hand over his forehead, then partially raising it, and "modestly peeping as from beneath a vail, would say, It is the old face again, friends!" The simple action and expression operated, says his biographer, like a charm; preacher and people were instantly on the best terms with each other; no one besides himself was wanted, for he could impart, in his peculiar way, what no one else could give. In Leeds the chapels were invariably crowded when he preached in them. Some of his sermons and speeches, often repeated, became famous throughout the Connection. His "Death on the Pale Horse" is described as a discourse surpassingly graphic and sublime. Under his sermon on "David slaying Goliath," an excited rustic rose in the congregation and shouted to the preacher, "Off with his head! off with his head!" A discourse to seamen, in which he described the wreck and loss of the soul, so aroused a seafaring hearer that he rose and cried out, "Launch the life-boat!" It was known as the "Life-boat sermon." Some of his allegorical missionary speeches would have been burlesques, delivered by any other man, but, with his peculiar manner, they seemed not only congruous, but often sublime examples of poetry and eloquence. His "Harvest Home," his "Reform Bill," "Railroad," and "Telescope" speeches became almost nationally famous. One who heard them says that "their effects on the immense and eager audiences I never saw before, nor expect to see again. Not a man, woman, or child could resist him; and there was so much Scripture in his representations, and all said in honor of Christ, that the speaker, with the sacred magic wand, was hid in the glory of his Divine Redeemer. His travels and labors were almost as extensive as those of Robert Newton; and few men have done more in support of the various institutions of Methodism."[22] His eloquence consisted not only of themes and allegories which, drawn out at length, as they were by him, would have been fantastic from any ordinary man, but often of single illustrations resplendently beautiful. In one of his prayers occurred the text, "Thou hast crowned me with loving-kindness and tender mercies." A writer who heard him often, says: "His imagination took fire at the metaphor, and presented before him a regal coronet, studded with numerous gems, having a center-stone of surpassing magnitude, brilliancy, and value. Consentaneously this became the 'crown' of 'loving-kindness and tender mercies.' The countless brilliants represented the blessings of Providence and grace, and the center-stone the 'priceless gem of salvation.' To express this as he wished was more difficult than to conceive it; and several feeble sentences were uttered before the 'crown' was shown to the people. But when, at length, it was exhibited in all its radiant glory, with its center-gem of purest luster, the 'deep *crimson* hue' of which was caught up and reflected in a thousand lights by the precious stones which clustered around it, the 'saints of the Most High shouted aloud for joy.'"[23]

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[22] Wakeley's Heroes of Methodism, p. 360.

[23] West's Sketches of Wesleyan Preachers, p. 326.

"What an astonishing mind he has!" exclaimed the learned Adam Clarke, after a long ride with him in a post-chaise. Such a man, of and among the people of Yorkshire, wearing, as was the custom of the substantial farmers of that shire, in their best attire on Sundays, breeches of corduroy or plain velvet, and thick soled "top boots;" living a life noted for honesty and purity; and overflowing with religious feeling, poetry, and humor, could not but be a man of power. During most of our present period, and down to the middle of the century, none of the greater lights of Methodism could eclipse him in popular assemblies. Though in the "local ranks," he was, as he called himself, a "traveling local preacher." Without accepting for his services a sixpence, besides his traveling expenses, he went to and fro, continually calling the multitudes to repentance, collecting money for poor churches, preaching at their dedications, pleading for missions, and recruiting the societies.

Another similar laborer did good service, in the local ministry, during this period, and for nearly forty years. "It was thought fitting that a memorial should be raised for Jonathan Saville, by which the Church might glorify God in him," wrote a president of the Wesleyan Conference, and proceeded to prepare a Memoir of the devoted man, which is one of the most remarkable of those many records, of the power of religion in lowly life, that Methodism has afforded to the Church.[24] Jonathan Saville was a poor, feeble, crippled man, the victim of cruel treatment in his childhood, whom Methodism found in the almshouse, but purified and exalted to be a "burning and shining light" in the land. His mother, a pious Moravian, died before he was four years old; his father, a good man, and religiously useful among his neighbors, was a "delver," and was killed in a quarry by a mass of earth falling upon him. The child was in Horton Workhouse when he was but seven years old.

[24] Memoir of Jonathan Saville, etc. By Rev. F. A. West. New York, 1853.

He was afterward apprenticed, a "fine, growing, active lad," but was sent by his master to work in the Delholme coal mines, where he labored from six o'clock in the morning till six at night, and, after walking two or three miles, was required to spin worsted till bed-time. His health failed, of course. Returning homeward one night, when about ten years old, he was so feeble that he could not free his feet, which had stuck fast in a piece of swampy ground. A young man helped him out, and assisted him to the house. He could go no more into the coal-pit; "my strength," he says, "was quite gone; I was more dead than alive, and my soul was sick within me;" but he was now closely confined to the spinning-wheel at home. Shivering with the cold one day, he stepped to the fire to warm himself, when a daughter of his master struck him, and pushed him away so rudely that he fell to the floor and broke his thigh-bone. He crawled into a room and lay down on a bed, but was commanded by his master, with terrible threats, to resume his work. Supporting himself by a chair, he attempted to reach the wheel, but fell to the floor, when the imbruted man dragged him, and forced him down upon a low stool at his task, where he labored the rest of the day in agony. No doctor was called to set his thigh; no relieving treatment was given him by the women of the house; they mocked at the groans of the little sufferer. He crept to his bed at night, where he held the fractured bone in its place with his hand. Nature at last healed the broken limb, but he was left a mere wreck; bent almost double, and for some time compelled to creep when he went out of doors. Hopeless of any profitable service from him, his master conveyed him to the workhouse, carrying him part of the way on his back, the broken leg of the poor boy "dangling in the air." The superintendent of the house took compassion on him, bathed him, comforted him, fed him well, and gave him light tasks at spinning; but for some time "I could not," he says, "carry my hand round the wheel for weakness and pain, but used to give it a push." The poor inmates healed his broken heart by their sympathies. They remembered that his pious father had often prayed within their dreary walls. An aged man among them made him a pair of crutches; an old paralyzed soldier taught him to read; and in one year he learned to read the Bible. He never forgot his kind teacher; in advanced life, when a successful preacher of the divine book, he said: "I well remember my creeping between the old man's shaking knees to say my lesson to him." He had suffered so much that when he was fourteen years old he was smaller in stature than when seven. But he worked so diligently that he was able to earn extra wages, and expended them at a neighboring evening school. He used to limp on his crutches to the Methodist chapel in Bradford, guiding thither an aged blind pauper, "the halt leading the blind;" and the good people, patting him on the head in the street, would say, "Poor Jonathan, his father's prayers will be heard for him yet;" they little supposed that he was to be venerated throughout their communion and live in their history.

After remaining some years in the almshouse, with improved but still feeble health, he learned the craft of a Warper, and his industry enabled him to earn a comfortable livelihood. He removed at last to Halifax, the scene of his remaining long life and of his greatest usefulness. There the religious instructions he had heard, at the Methodist chapel, in Bradford, ripened into a rich Christian experience. Under a sermon by Benson he received the peace of God. He became a prayer-leader, and was singularly useful in that office for many years. The veteran Thomas Taylor appreciated his excellent character and talents, and appointed him a class-leader. In this function he immediately became eminently successful. His gentle spirit, subdued by long sufferings and sanctified by piety; his clear understanding, especially in the word of God, studied under such disciplinary adversities; his apt remarks, quaint, strikingly pertinent, concisely brief, and refreshed by a cheerfulness which, on appropriate occasions, coruscated with humor and even wit, led not only simple but intelligent people to seek his religious guidance. He had come forth from such deep waters of affliction, that he never could doubt the merciful providence of God toward good men in trials, or their final deliverance; he always, therefore, had an apt word for the sorrowful or tempted. To one who was suffering in the latter respect he said, "You cannot prevent the birds from flying over your head, but you need not let them build in it;" to another in bondage through fear of death, "If God were to give you dying grace now it would be a burden to you. He will give you living grace now, and dying grace when you want it."

He soon had two, and then three classes under his care. His original class "swarmed" six times, and their new leaders were mostly his "pupils." His zeal prompted him to labor for the salvation of the country regions around Halifax. There being no Methodist chapels at Southowram, Ovenden, Blackmires, Sowerby, Sowerby Bridge, Ripponden, Mill-Bank, Elland, Brighouse, Clayton-Heights, or Luddenden; and the people being scattered about in the valleys and on the hill sides, far from a church, and in a state of spiritual darkness little better than that of the heathen, he procured the aid of three other Wesleyan laymen of like mind, and went forth among these hamlets, holding prayer-meetings on Sundays and week-day evenings, and often conducting seven or eight on a single Sabbath. In the early part of our present period he was signally useful in such services, not yet a preaching but a praying evangelist, among the rustic communities. His band of helpers was often opposed by reckless hearers; some had to stand as sentinels at the doors, while others conducted the meetings, but they were always successful. At Southowram there was not one Methodist when they began; in a short time a class was formed there of twenty-two members. At Luddenden a great revival attended his humble labors from 1799 to 1801; in half a year fifty-four members joined the society.

He lived to see three chapels and many local preachers raised up in this neighborhood. His little company of "prayer-leaders"[4] multiplied to twelve bands, and maintained meetings in eleven hamlets, in all of which, save one, there were, at first, no persons capable of conducting such services; but in most of them he saw chapels, or other accommodations for regular worship, sooner or later provided. At some of these meetings great crowds attended, and great effects followed. In one of them his brethren had to put him on a table to pray. "Had they not done so," he says, "I believe I should have been smothered on account of the press and my small stature. As I was praying the power of God came among us, and many found mercy. The very men who had formerly persecuted me now came to me like children to be instructed. Some of them afterward became acceptable and useful local preachers."

In Halifax, and in all the villages within six or eight miles of it, did he pursue these labors. He became their apostle. He was unable to ride on horseback, but would sometimes trudge through twenty-five miles a day. He and his praying associates were "not unfrequently assailed," says his biographer, "with snowballs, rotten eggs, and stones. But, nothing daunted, they found their work its own reward; and the wintry storm and the scorching summer's sun saw Jonathan Saville traveling over hills, and exploring valleys, calling the poor cottagers together who lived far from any place of worship, and who could not call the Sabbath a delight, giving them a word of exhortation, and then praying with and for them. It is not too much to say that no man within that neighborhood has been in such labors more abundant; and no doubt hundreds have been, by his instrumentality, saved from sin and brought to God."

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[4] These bands of prayer-leaders were an important "feature" of Methodism in Wesley's day. A society of them was organized, with his approbation, in London, in 1772, and the example was copied elsewhere. They were called "workhouse preachers" in London, "village preachers" in Bristol, "prayer-leaders" in Leeds, "poorhouse preachers" in Dublin. In 1800 they adopted an extensive plan of labor in London, under the direction of Benson and his city colleagues. See Myles's Hist., chap. 10, who gives some ten pages to an account of their organization.

In 1803 he was licensed as a local preacher. He had virtually been one for years, though he had never discoursed on a text. His popularity became general; crowds flocked to the chapels in Halifax to hear him, and he did good service against the infidel opinions of Paine, which prevailed among the working classes of that city. He attempted not to discuss these errors, but to counteract them by the simple, spiritual truths of the Gospel. His crippled appearance, his genial spirit, his deep piety, his originality of thought, and homely but strong language, attracted irresistibly the rude masses; they both pitied and revered him, and followed him in hosts. His preaching was peculiarly effective; frequently several persons were awakened under a single sermon. "He was the man of the people," says his biographer; "he was a little man, and everybody knew the cause of his diminutiveness. There was a sparkling, pleasant wit about him, which made everybody feel that he was happy; and it tended to enkindle and diffuse cheerfulness around him. He thought with *the many;* and he always made the service of God *appear* reasonable by the cheerfulness of his own spirit, and by the felicity of his illustrations. These were generally in similes or continued allegory, which always impress the multitude more than an elaborate argument. The latter he could not have managed, and he was too wise to attempt it. He knew the length of his line, and was content with it. He kept to those great subjects which ennoble all language, kindle the sensation of sublimity in all minds, make the foolish wise and the weak strong."

His voice was remarkable for its strength and musical modulations, his action was energetic, and "many of his sermons produced extraordinary impressions." Like the Village Blacksmith and the Yorkshire Farmer, he had several discourses which became celebrated among the people under quaint titles. His sermons on the "Vision of Dry

Bones," on "Studying to be quiet, and to do our own business," and on Whitefield's favorite text, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord," will never be forgotten, says his biographer, by those who heard them. The last especially is said to have usually produced electrical effect.

He was called abroad, in all directions, to speak on extraordinary as well as ordinary occasions. He had the happiness to preach in the town in whose work-house he had found shelter. His emotions there can be better conceived than described. As he rose in the pulpit his heart overflowed with his recollections of the scene. "If I had a word that would do your souls good," he exclaimed, I would give it you, though it should cost me my life. For I owe my life to you, through the mercy of God. . . . If you want to know where I got my education, where my college was, it was the work-house yonder; there it was that I received all my education, between the knees of an old pensioner." "It was encouraging to me," he adds, "to learn afterward that the daughter of the overseer was awakened under the sermon. She is now gone to heaven."

When in the height of his popularity, he was taken, after preaching a missionary sermon, to visit a sick woman at some distance. He was surprised at the house. He stood still on the floor, and looked on the hearth a long and fixed gaze. It was a memorable spot to him. "As I was standing there," he says, "I gave a look back, and inwardly exclaimed, 'What has God done for poor me!' and then I thought of my three or four years of suffering in that very house, (for there it was that my thigh was broken,) and I said, 'Is it possible that the Lord should have brought me here to pray with this woman!'" He knelt down with a full heart, and prayed for her with such fervor and effect that she broke forth with supplications and rapturous thanksgivings, her soul, if not her body, healed. "O Lord," cried the good man, as he rose from his knees, "now thou hast repaid me for all my sufferings in this house!" A veteran con vert, eighty years of age, who had come in and taken a seat at the chimney corner, joined in the thanksgivings. "It would have made a good scene for a painter," adds Saville; no painter could have done it justice.

If Jonathan Saville was not grateful for his personal deformity, he was grateful for the advantages it gave him in his Christian labors. It made irresistible his appeals in behalf of the poor and afflicted; it gave force, by contrast, to his peculiar talents in public discourse; it commanded tender respect from even ruffian men; drunkards in the street, it is said, became reverential as he passed them, for they knew what he had endured and how he had conquered. It is remarkable, says his biographer, how seldom they were known to treat him with incivility. One case is recorded which proved a blessing that the crippled preacher would not have foregone. On going to a country appointment an intoxicated man knocked him down, calling him a "crooked little devil." "The God that made me crooked made thee straight," said the preacher as he rose. Whether the drunkard perceived the significant reproof or not, the exhortation, with which it was followed, sunk into his heart. Years later, when Saville had been preaching in the city of Hull, a stranger seized his hand, exclaiming, "I bless God that ever I knocked thee down!" The good man was astonished; the stranger recalled the old offense, and said that it led to his reformation and conversion.

Children loved him, and he was very useful among them. By his diminutive stature he seemed one of them; by his cheerful spirit he was as juvenile as any of them. They would gather about him in the streets, where he conversed with them on simple religious topics, asking them whether they went to Sunday-school? whether they loved God? "My deformity," he wrote, "has been the means of my preaching many hundreds of sermons in this way to children." He was an indefatigable visitor of the afflicted. As he knew from his own sad experience how to address them, they eagerly sent for him. "He visited," says his biographer, "ten times as many of them as any of his brethren." During many years he was one of the most popular speakers of the Connection on the missionary platform; many of his speeches have been pronounced "brilliant, and worthy of men of greater name." He stood up, in this cause, by the side of the greatest leaders of Methodism, and hardly could their superior abilities prove more effective, on popular occasions, than his peculiar genius.

Jonathan Saville, Samuel Hick, and William Dawson, personal friends and fellow-laborers, were, in fine, three of the most useful men of Methodism during these times, and for much of the first half of the new century. They formed a class, which probably could have found, in no other Church, an open field for their extraordinary talents; they achieved historical results in the denomination, and their lives are among its most significant historical illustrations. Its strict regimen trained them to habits which, notwithstanding their eccentric dispositions, never detracted from its honor; their peculiarities seldom or never degenerated into vulgar indecorums; they were made, by their religion, modest as well as brave men, deferential to authorities, and regardful of religious discipline. They were good examples to all their brethren, except in their peculiar talents, and were not so in their talents, only because these were inimitable.

Relieved of its late controversies, and stimulated by so many new auspices, we cannot be surprised at the rapid progress of the Church during the present period. At each session of the Conference was reported an increase of members in the societies. The aggregate, under the care of the Connection, as reported for 1805, was 140,544; the increase, since 1797, being 32,283, an average gain of more than 4,035 per year. The number of circuits advanced from 145 to 194, showing an average increase of more than six for each year.

The number of preachers on the Conference roll increased from 399 to 559, though the loss by deaths, expulsions, and locations amounted to 82.[5] No less than 56 died at their posts in these eight years; less than half that number retired from the itinerancy.

Meanwhile the Methodistic movement in the Republic of the United States had extended in every direction, and had covered the country with its network of circuits to the remotest frontier settlements. Its members, amounting to 58,663 in 1797, increased to 119,945; its 262 preachers to 433.[6]

The aggregate number of Methodists throughout the world, at the close of this period, was 260,489; the aggregate traveling ministry 992; the aggregate increase of the former being 93,565; of the latter 331. Though in both countries the cause had been simultaneously and severely tried, toward the close of the last century, by internal perturbations, and by schisms, in each it now stood forth with invincible strength, harmonious and consolidated for prospective successes which its most sanguine laborers had not dared to anticipate.

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[5] Expulsions and voluntary "locations" are not discriminated in the early Minutes; both are classed under the phrase, "desisted from traveling."

[6] Bangs's Hist. of M. E. Church, vol. ii, ann. 1797-1805.

CHAPTER VII.

CONFERENCES FROM 1805 TO 1815.

Liberal Changes in the Rules of the Conference — First Ballot Election to the "Legal One Hundred" — Home Missions begun — Foreign Missions — Organization of Missionary Societies — British and Foreign Bible Society — Chapel Building — The Committee of Privileges — Lord Sidmouth's Bill — Triumph of Religious Liberty — Great Numerical Growth — Deaths of Preachers — John Crook, the "Apostle of the Isle of Man" — John Pawson — His Labors and Trials — His Death — John Baxter.

The presidents of the Conference, in the ensuing decade, were Adam Clarke, John Barber, James Wood, Thomas Taylor, Joseph Benson, Charles Atmore, Joseph Entwisle, Walter Griffith, successively, except that Adam Clarke was re-elected in 1814, and John Barber in 1815. There could hardly be a surer indication of the settled condition of the government of the Church, and of its general tranquillity, than the fact that but few, if any, salient points are presented in its Conference Minutes during this long period. Modifications were occasionally made in the administrative forms of the denomination, but no fundamental changes occurred. It moved on steadily under its well-defined economy, extending rapidly and fortifying its great interests as it advanced. The most important improvements in its government were made in 1814. The president and secretary of the Conference had hitherto been elected by the one hundred legal members, and vacancies among the latter had been filled by seniority of service in the body. Both these usages were now modified in a manner which, while it did not contravene Wesley's Deed of Declaration, conceded much to the rest of the Conference. The preachers who had been fourteen or more years in the traveling ministry were now allowed to vote for presidents and secretaries, the elections being subject to the separate vote of the one hundred; and in all vacancies among the latter, three out of four were to be thenceforward filled according to the old rule of seniority, but the fourth by ballot, without restriction as to the ministerial age of the candidate.

This last modification seems to have been made for the purpose of placing Bunting in the legal Conference. His eminent abilities rendered him, at least, the most eligible candidate for the first election, and he was immediately honored with it. The change also liberalized the government of the body: there were now eight hundred and forty-two preachers on its roll; at the death of Wesley there were but two hundred and ninety-one. One hundred was more than a third of the latter, but not an eighth of the former; it was so small a minority as to form a sort of clerical oligarchy, which could not well be compatible with the free spirit and activity of the Conference. The change modified at least this liability. Much, also, of the best intellect and administrative talent of the ministry would be excluded from the legal hundred by the old restriction; it now became possible for them to have their rightful recognition.

Coke, not content with his foreign labors and his Irish and Welsh Missions, formed a plan for Home Missions, which was adopted at the session of 1806. It was designed to supply laborers to parts of the country which were not reached by the regular circuits. Preachers were designated to eight such districts by the Conference. A historian of English Methodism claims for it the honor of beginning, by this act, the system of modern Home Missions. "Much," he says, "has been done, both by the national Church and by other Churches, for diffusing religious knowledge and influence throughout the destitute parts of the country, but no measure of the kind was at this time contemplated. It was left for Methodism to take the initiative."[1]

The foreign missions of the Conference received its in cessant attention. In 1806 they were formed into districts on the plan of the domestic work. with district meetings and chairmen, which were required to keep records of their finances and other business, and to report regularly to the Home Committee. In 1807 the standard of ministerial character, in the missions, was elevated by a requirement that no man should be appointed to them who was not competent for the domestic ministry; and all missionaries were forbidden to possess slaves, whether by marriage or otherwise. In 1813 the Conference, with much reluctance, authorized Coke to visit India for the establishment of a mission there; an event of great importance, as, by his death on the voyage, the Connection was reduced, or rather raised, to the necessity of organizing its means of missionary support. The first society for this purpose was formed, the same year, at Leeds; numerous similar associations speedily sprung up in other towns, and in 1814 the Conference recognized this new era, in the history of the denomination, by issuing an address, which called upon every district in the nation to organize such institutions. A general treasurer and two general secretaries were appointed. Jabez Bunting, who had been active in the formation of the first society, was removed from Leeds to London, that he might, from the Metropolitan headquarters, promote more effectually the new movement; and in 1815 an executive committee, consisting of an equal number of preachers and laymen, was appointed to superintend the enlarging missionary interest of the Church.

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[1] Smith's History, II, 5, 4.

Methodists generally hailed with enthusiasm the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. Two of their principal laymen, Christopher Lundius and Joseph Butterworth, were conspicuous among its earliest promoters, and in 1806 the President of the Conference, Adam Clarke, was appointed on its committee, and, for years, rendered it important services in Oriental translations. In 1807 the Conference, contrary to its usual course, appointed him a third time to London, in accordance with a unanimous request of the committee of the society, which pronounced his services indispensable to its labors in providing the Holy Scriptures for foreign languages. The Conference further testified its interest for the institution by ordering a collection in the principal Methodist chapels for its treasury. About thirteen hundred pounds were thus contributed.

It was then a law of the denomination, rendered necessary by its financial embarrassments, that no new chapel should be erected without the consent of the Conference. The vigorous growth of the Church, during the early part of this period, is shown by the large number of cases to which such permission was given. To no less than eighty-eight was it voted in 1806, to eighty in the next year, to one hundred and twenty-nine in the year following. So urgent did the increase of the Connection render the necessity of new chapels, and the relief or renovation of old ones, that the Conference of 1808 sent out to the district meetings a proposition to form a Chapel Fund, the first public suggestion of a scheme which has been of permanent and inestimable advantage to the denomination.

As the growing importance of its great work became more and more obvious—obvious beyond its largest expectations—the Conference gave increased attention to its defense against political interference. It enlarged its Committee of Privileges, which was especially charged with the vigilant protection of its legal rights. There were signs of the times which excited, in the session of 1810, apprehension of coming difficulties.[2] It appointed on the Committee of Privileges for that year an increased number of prominent men. Coke was at the head of its ministerial section, which included all the preachers in London, among whom were Clarke, Benson, Reece, and Rodda. Among its laymen were Lundius, Marriott, Butterworth, Bulmer, Haslop, and Thomas Thompson. The Quarterly Review, for November, 1810, contained a severe paper on Methodism and its peril to the Establishment. The article was attributed to the pen of Robert Southey; it charged the Wesleyans with the design of subverting the national Church, and predicted that they would sooner or later be competent to such a design. It showed that the denomination had grown from nearly thirty thousand members, in 1770, to nearly one hundred and ten thousand, in 1800; and that its average increase per annum was about seven thousand. "It is no light evil for a state" it argued, "to have within its bosom so numerous, and active, and increasing a party. How long will it be before this people begins to count heads with the Establishment?" The Reviewer intimated that the Wesleyans were aiming at a revolution of the supreme government of the country.

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[2] Wes. Mag. 1845, page 534.

Public attention being thus called to the rapid growth of Dissent, and the declension of the national Church, Lord Sidmouth, in about seven months after the publication of the Review, introduced into Parliament a bill which, if it had been adopted, would have struck the dearest rights and most effective labors of all evangelical dissenting Churches, but especially of the Methodists. The regular Wesleyan ministry would have been seriously cramped by it. Subordinate laborers of the Connection would have been practically disabled. Its local preachers, exhorters, prayer-leaders, Sunday-school teachers, many thousand in numbers, would have been either silenced or forced into the prisons of the kingdom. Many good men, like Wilberforce, whose prejudice for the Establishment was stronger than their charity, favored the obnoxious bill.[4] Sidmouth, Wilberforce, and their associates in the measure, had obtained statistics which could not fail to afford alarming arguments to Churchmen. They had ascertained that the number of licensed teachers in the half century from 1760 to 1810 was three thousand six hundred and seventy-two; that during this time no less than twelve thousand one hundred and sixty-one chapels and rooms had been licensed for public worship; that of country churches and chapels, in all parishes which included a thousand persons or more, the Dissenters and Wesleyans had a majority of

[4] Wilberforce endeavored to secure Adam Clarke's favor for it. Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 335.

nine hundred and ten over the Establishment, not including private places in which preaching was maintained. The facts were significant enough, but the remedy proposed was preposterous, and destructive of the religious liberties of Englishmen. The whole Methodist Connection was aroused by this danger, and the Dissenters generally joined in its remonstrances. The Wesleyan ecclesiastical arrangements offered the best conveniences for eliciting public opinion on the question. The districts notified their preachers and people, and petitions were rapidly signed and sent to Parliament. The Committee of Privileges met in London, and sent a deputation, of which Thomas Thompson (who was a member of Parliament) was chairman, to consult with Lord Sidmouth. Sidmouth persisted in his course, but the committee secured a speech from Lord Erskine against the proposed law. He presented the Methodist petitions. An attempt was made to press the bill with indecent haste; it was introduced on the 11th of May, and its second reading ordered for the 17th; but on the latter day, by the agency of Lord Stanhope and Earl Grey, it was postponed to the 21st. During the delay the whole religious population of the kingdom was stirred with agitation. Stanhope, in presenting a petition bearing two thousand signatures, declared that, if the intolerant party would not yield, the thousands would be multiplied to millions. Other peers presented memorials against the measure. Erskine on the 21st made a powerful speech against it, and moved that it be read six months from that day. The motion prevailed without a division, and the oppressive measure was defeated. Delivered from this great danger, the Conference of 1811 voted most hearty and unanimous thanks to the Committee of Privileges for "their well directed, indefatigable and successful exertions in opposition to Lord Sidmouth's bill," and acknowledged that they had placed the Conference and Connection "under the greatest obligations." The services of Thompson, Marriott, Butterworth, and Allen, were specially recognized.

Failing in this extraordinary measure, an attempt was made by its advocates so to interpret and apply the Act of Toleration as to accomplish, in some degree, their aims. An applicant for license was required to show that he was the pastor of a particular or single congregation. The law thus construed would be fatal to the Wesleyan itinerant ministry, to candidates for the ministry, and to all preachers beyond the Establishment, who had charge of more than a single church. Ellenborough and other judges put this construction upon the act, and many instances occurred in various parts of the kingdom, in which Wesleyan preachers, itinerant and local, were refused licenses.[5] The Committee of Privileges waited upon Percival, the prime minister, to remonstrate against this oppression, and the Connection was again compelled to defend religious freedom. An act of Parliament[6] was obtained which defeated their oppressors, and increased liberty was secured to the land. This act, one of the most important events in the history of English religious liberty, was procured directly by the exertions of the Methodists, though they were powerfully aided by their dissenting brethren generally. It swept away the barbarous "Five Mile Act," and the "Conventicle Acts" under which Wesley and his helpers suffered so often; it also repealed another offensive act which oppressed the respectable body of Christians called Quakers, and it was so liberally constructed as to meet alike the wants of Wesleyans and Dissenters. The Conference again voted its thanks, in 1812, to its Committee of Privileges for the success of their labors in securing this "invaluable law." It also issued an Address to its people commemorating the event. In contemplating this measure, it said, "we cannot but adore the goodness of God, who hath remembered us in our time of need, for his mercy endureth forever!"

Thus blessed with internal peace and increasing external advantages, with powerful representative men in its ministry, with the reorganization of its missionary plans, and with augmenting wealth which was lavishly given for the erection of chapels and for its other expenditures, the Church advanced rapidly during this period. The returns of the Conference, at the close of the decade, showed that the membership had increased from 140,544 in 1805, to 230,948, a gain of 90,404 in ten years, an average of more than 9,000 per year. The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America reported, in 1815, 211,165 members, a gain of 91,220 in ten years.[5]

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[5] Mem. of Benson, p. 447.

[6] Act of 53 Geo. III., c. 155.

The aggregate number of Methodists throughout the world was 442,113. In a quarter of a century they had gained 139,395 in the British Islands, 14,585 in their Missions, and 153,538 in the United States. Their aggregate increase for these twenty-five years was 307,518. Their numerical progress, significant of so much else, had already become one of the most notable facts of ecclesiastical history.

The Wesleyan ministry increased during this decade from 559 to 942; a gain of 383. The aggregate Methodist ministry throughout the world was now 1,646, besides many thousands of local preachers. The former had gained, in twenty-five years, 1,096, though hundreds had retired from it, to the local ministry, or had fallen by death, especially in the New World, where the privations of the itineracy compelled, sooner or later, more than five hundred to locate, out of six hundred and fifty whose names were entered in the Minutes before the end of the last century.

Methodism had about trebled its communicants, in the Wesleyan Church, in a quarter of a century, and in the same time had nearer quadrupled than trebled them in the American Republic.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary numerical growth of the Conference, during this decade, it lost by deaths, locations, and expulsions no less than 148 preachers. Only five of these are recorded as "expelled;" 46 desisted from traveling, most of them on account of ill health or pecuniary embarrassments; 97 fell at their posts by death. The obituaries of these nearly one hundred evangelists are an impressive record of holy lives and triumphant deaths. They commemorate some historical names.

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[5] Dr. Smith's table (Hist., II, 5, 6) is inaccurate. It gives by mistake the returns of 1814 for 1815, and is also erroneous in its American statistics for 1790. See Am. Minutes, vol. i, 1790 and 1815, and also Bangs's History of the M. E. Church, vols. i and ii, for the same years.

John Crook, "the Apostle of the Isle of Man," is on the list of the dead for 1806. His services and sufferings, on that island, have already been narrated.[6] After founding Methodism there, he entered the itineracy and traveled about thirty-one years, an indefatigable evangelist, in England and Ireland. In the latter, his brethren say that he was made the instrument of "turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." To the Methodists of the north of Ireland his name is still precious. He is described as mighty in the divine word, a fond reader of the old Puritan divines, a lover of poetry, a good singer, terse in his style, sometimes quaint with the phrases of his old authors. He was robust, erect and firm in his gait, with a fair, ruddy complexion, and a friendly and engaging countenance, and was remarkably neat in his person. During some years, in the latter part of his life, he was much afflicted, but could not be deterred from his work by weakness and pain. He was even sublime in his sufferings, preaching for the most part on his knees, being unable to stand. "He was honored of the Lord," says the obituary, "in his last few months on the Scarborough circuit, where he fell asleep in Jesus, aged about sixty-three, on the 27th of December, 1805, amid the attentions and tears of the people."

The next year John Pawson went to his rest by a triumphant death, after about forty-four years of itinerant labors. No name is more saintly than his in the memory of early Methodists. He was born in Thorner, near Leeds, in 1737.[7] A strict education preserved his morals through his somewhat exposed youth. In his nineteenth year he removed to Harewood, where only one Methodist then resided, and she died immediately after his arrival, praying and predicting that God would speedily introduce the despised cause among her neighbors. A "most ungodly and profane man," a determined enemy to the Methodists, was soon afterward converted; he paid his neglected debts, led a pure life, became a zealous Methodist, and opened his house, some time later, for Pawson to conduct in it a prayer-meeting. The latter wandered to Askwith, seeking the Methodists, whom he had never yet heard. After attending their meetings, he returned home with new views of the Christian life and a determination to save his soul. His parents and other kindred, very honest people, were alarmed at his conduct and opposed him resolutely. An uncle, who had promised to leave him some property, disinherited him, but soon his only brother, his brother-in-law, one of his sisters and her husband were awakened by his exhortations. His father's wrath was kindled, and "he thought that all his family was quite ruined." "Your mother and I," he said, "are both growing old, and you will bring down our gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. These Methodists are the most bewitching people upon earth; when once a person hears them there is no possibility of persuading him to leave them again. You think to make my house a preaching-house when once my head is laid; but I will take care that it shall never be yours. I will leave it to the poor of the parish before the Methodists shall have anything to do with it. Do give up this way, and let me die in peace; and you may do as you please when I am no more."

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[6] Vol. ii, b. 5, ch. 11.

[7] Jackson's Early Meth. Preachers, vol. ii, p. 3.

Pawson, though deeply affected by his entreaties, could not resist his own deep convictions. "Does the law judge without hearing?" he asked, and he entreated the aged man to go and hear the Methodists. He went; he returned to pray; and while on his knees, in a stable, the divine light dawned upon his conscience; "he trembled exceedingly," and "roared for the disquietness of his soul." Soon afterward young Pawson, with his converted father and all the family, eight persons, joined the Methodist Society. His father now himself invited the itinerants to his house, which became one of their homes and preaching places. A revival ensued, and many of their neighbors were converted. Pawson began to hold prayer-meetings in the houses of the people, giving them occasionally a word of exhortation, and reading a sermon or the Homilies. Soon two classes were sustained in the town. He was induced to visit and exhort in neighboring villages, and in 1761 he preached his first sermon at Horsforth, and was enrolled on the local preachers' plan for the circuit. The next year Wesley received him, on trial, at the Leeds Conference, and sent him to the York circuit with Peter Jaco and other like-minded evangelists. His labors were immediately successful, and he went to the ensuing Conference, at London, rejoicing in his office as a Methodist itinerant. "We had," he says, "no money matters to settle in those days; but after the preachers' characters were examined, and they were stationed for the next year, all the time was taken up in speaking upon spiritual subjects. This was the only time I ever saw that faithful servant of God, the Welsh apostle, Howel Harris."

He was sent thence to Haworth circuit, the former scene of the heroic Grimshaw's labors. "Upon coming into the circuit," he writes, "we found all the people mourning the loss of that eminently faithful servant of God, who had died in April that year. They thought, 'Now he is gone all is over with us; we shall surely come to nothing;' but the work prospered wonderfully, and I believe there was much more good done on the circuit, in that one year, than had been done in seven years before. In Keighley, also, and the neighborhood there was a glorious revival of the work of God, such as no one then living could remember to have seen. It seemed as if the word of God would carry all before it, and men, women, and children were converted on all sides."

Thenceforward no member of the Conference was more diligent in labors, or more steadfast in trials, than John Pawson. His talents were respectable, without being remarkable, but he was so imbued with the unction of the Holy Spirit that his word was powerful. He bore courageously the violence of the mobs of the day. At Norwich, "to break the windows, disturb our meetings, abuse our persons, was," he writes, "their constant practice." At Colchester they were "exceedingly violent;" one night they brought large ox horns, and sounded them so uproariously that he was obliged to stop. "When I spoke as loud as I could," he says, "I could not hear the sound of my own voice." He retreated through a dense, excited mob; at the Bridge they inclosed him on all sides, but he there mounted his horse and escaped unhurt. Some of his brethren, however, were seriously injured, and "did not recover for a considerable time." At Thong the minister of Honley sent a constable to seize him, but the design was defeated. The officer arrived at the moment Pawson announced his text; he was curious to hear the sermon; it got hold upon his conscience; "he turned to the Lord, found salvation, lived a few happy years, and died in peace." "So far," adds the faithful itinerant, "was Satan disappointed in his hope in sending this poor man to the preaching." Many were the similar deliverances of the early heroes of Methodism.

In 1785 Wesley ordained him, with Hanby and Taylor, for Scotland; he labored hard there, and became "fully satisfied that it requires a far greater degree of divine influence, generally speaking, to awaken a Scotchman out of the dead sleep of sin than to awaken an Englishman." He succeeded, however, in building a commodious chapel in Glasgow.

During the trials which followed Wesley's death, he was one of the pillars of the shaken structure of Methodism, and few men did more to give it steadfastness in those perilous days. His prudence was perfect, but the sanctity of his life gave him still more influence; and his persuasive voice was heard pervading the agitated societies, exhorting them to holiness and peace. He was elected President of the Conference of 1793. As he was favorable to the claims of the people for the sacraments, and, being ordained by Wesley had administered them in some instances, he was the better able to control their disputes, and stepped in as a peace maker wherever danger was most imminent.

He survived most of his fellow-laborers. In 1800 he writes, with mournful interest, of the "many old preachers" who had gone; there were only two in the Connection who had traveled longer than he, and at the late Conference there were but two present who had attended the session of 1762 when he joined them. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? O no." The next year he writes: "I have now attended forty successive Conferences, which is more than any preacher now living can say, besides myself. Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly! Amen and amen!"

The following year, pursuing his travels, he rejoiced to be able to record that it appeared to him that the preachers and people in general, were in as good a state as he had ever known them to be in. In 1804, still laboring on Bristol circuit, he writes: "Lord, here I am, thy willing servant; do with me what thou wilt, only be thou with me, and right precious to me. O my God, let me finish well at last!" In one of his last letters to an aged fellow-laborer, he says: "What changes have you and I lived to see! How many of our fellow-laborers have gone before us! Where are the Hoppers, the Cownleys, the Jacos, the Murlins, the Hanbys, the Mathers, the Manners and, above all, our venerable fathers in the Gospel? They are all gone hence, and we see them no more. Welcome, thrice welcome, that happy day when this clay tabernacle shall be taken down and laid in the dust. My old and long-tried friend, what a prospect will soon, yea, very soon, open to you and me! I can hardly forbear saying, Lord, hasten the happy time! O bring near the joyful hour! I think I shall get the start of you; and should it be so I will gladly (if the Lord permit it) give you the meeting, and show you the way to the celestial regions of bliss and immortal glory."

The veteran preached his last sermon at Wakefield, February 3, 1806. His dying chamber was an extraordinary, a sublime scene; he cried out: "It is enough; Christ died for me; I am mounting up to the throne of God!" Then breaking forth in rapturous strains of praise, and clasping his hands, he said, "I know I am dying, but my deathbed is a bed of roses; I have no thorns planted upon my dying pillow. Heaven already is begun; everlasting life is won, is won, is won! I die a safe, easy, happy death. Thou, my God, art present; I know, I feel thou art. Precious Jesus! Glory, glory be to God!"

On the 19th of March, 1806, he said to a fellow-itinerant and another attendant, "I feel I am dying, but must get up and die in my chair." Being seated, he said, "Now kneel down, both of you, and pray that I may be released, if it be the will of God." After they had prayed he took the hand of each of them and gave them his dying blessing, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, and then said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Soon after he was again put into bed, and exclaimed, "My God! my God! my God!" These were his last distinct words.

About a month before his death he wrote a farewell address to the Conference, which should never be forgotten. "Take good care," he said to them, "that you constantly clearly, fully, and pointedly preach the good old Methodist doctrines. They are the very truth as revealed in God's own book. I die in the full assurance of a hope of being inconceivably and eternally happy with God my Saviour, and with all his redeemed people."

Thomas Rutherford died this year, after thirty-four years of devoted labors and eminent usefulness in the itineracy. He had good ministerial abilities; his preaching was peculiarly demonstrative and affecting, and his life was unblamably pure. Henry Moore, who knew him through his whole career, admits that, as he was a man, he must have had the infirmities of humanity, but says, "I solemnly declare I know of nothing which can be truly termed a shade in his character."[8] After traveling and suffering in England, Scotland, and Ireland, he died, uttering as his last words: "He has, indeed, been a precious Christ to me, and now I feel him to be my rock, my strength, my rest, my hope, my joy, my all in all!"

John Baxter, " holy, zealous, and useful man of God," has already been noticed as, next to Nathaniel Gilbert, the founder of the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies.[9] Coke, driven to Antigua by the storms of the ocean, found him there sustaining the Church which Gilbert's death, years before, had left without a pastor. He renounced a lucrative government service and devoted himself to missionary labors among the slaves of the islands. He was "greatly beloved by the negroes, and went to glory from among them in the triumph of faith," say the old Minutes.

Among the names of other devoted men, recorded in the obituaries of these years, are those of Pierre du Pontavice and Mahy of the French Missions, heretofore noticed; of John Pritchard, Mathias Joyce, Paul Greenwood, and a host of others; and, in the last year, is the crowning name of Thomas Coke, who will more fitly claim our attention hereafter.

While many were thus disappearing from the itinerant ranks, its reinforcements were continued and numerous. No less than 478 were received on trial in the present decade, an average of nearly 48 per year. Among them are the names of Edward Grindrod, (1806,) Theophilus Lessey and Thomas Waugh, (1808,) William Reilly and Barnabas Shaw, (1810,) James Dixon, (1812,) Joseph Beaumont, (1813,) John Hannah, (1814,) and John Beecham, (1815,) some of whom still live, whose services will be more or less alluded to hereafter in our narrative, or will afford rich materials for a continued history of the cause which they have so faithfully promoted.

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[8] Moore's Memoir of Rutherford, Meth. Mag., 1808.

[9] See vol. ii, book v, chap. 11.

CHAPTER VIII.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD FROM 1805 TO 1815.

Religious Excitement at Keighley — Entwisle's Hardships and Successes on Rochester Circuit — Thomas Thompson, of Hull — Trials of the Home Missionaries — Mobs — Success in Wales — Bramwell's successful Labors — The "Great Revival" in Cornwall — Sketch of William Carvosso — His extraordinary Usefulness — Lorenzo Dow — First English Camp-meeting — The "Primitive Methodists" — Latter years and Death of Mary Fletcher — Lady Mary Fitzgerald — Her Sufferings — Her Character and Death.

Much of the numerical growth of the Connection, during this decade of peace, was owing to those seasons of spiritual prosperity called "revivals." It was continually refreshed by them. The religious excitement at Bradford, already noticed, lasted some time and extended widely. Wesley himself had seldom if ever witnessed a more profound spiritual awakening. The next year (1806) Keighley was the scene of a similar interest. Numerous prayer-meetings, in private houses, were so thronged that the vestry had to be opened for their accommodation. This was soon found to be too small for the inquiring multitudes, and the chapel was opened. The gracious influence spread from family to family; people at their homes were struck with powerful religious convictions, and sent for the Methodists to come in and pray with them; the sound of hymns and supplications, heard in the streets, attracted their neighbors; impromptu prayer-meetings were thus held in many places, and were continued till the evening hour of public worship, "the mid-day meal being frequently forgotten, or laid aside untouched." Conversions were numerous in these little meetings, and the interest continued to spread till most of the families in the place shared its blessings. It reached also to neighboring places.[1] Operatives sometimes spent the noon hour, in prayer, within their mills. Their overseers could not but perceive that a divine influence rested upon them; in one case work was suspended for the remainder of the day, the workmen continuing on their knees; "I dare not disturb them, for God is among them," said their employer, as he gazed upon the unwonted scene. Thus it was in Yeadon, where more than five hundred persons were added to the classes in three months.

During the same year Entwisle had much success on Rochester circuit; a hard field of labor, with but few and poor societies, but affording many new openings for the missionary efforts of the itinerants. "Having no horse," he wrote, "we have much walking in lonesome roads, narrow lanes, wet fields, and, in one instance, through an extensive park, in the night. As yet we have no lodgings in our new places. One of them is five miles, another six, and another eight miles distant: from these places we return to supper. However, we have souls for our hire; and many poor people come two, three, and even four or five miles, from beyond where we preach, thirsting for the words of eternal life. In these places, and others, the people never before heard a Methodist preacher. The whole country seems ready to receive us, and I doubt not that we could introduce preaching into every village had we an opportunity of going to them." "Never," he adds, "have I seen so much fruit of my labors in the same time."[2]

To the poverty of the circuit, its long walks, and hard labors, were added the severer trials of persecution. He was mobbed, his meetings were disturbed by the blowing of horns and beating of kettles, and he had to appeal to the courts for protection; but his work prospered. At Upchurch he was soon able to write, "God is powerfully working in this neighborhood." He preached at Gravesend: "the prospect is pleasing," he wrote; "I trust a Church will be founded here." His hope was realized; he formed the first Methodist Society there, and lived to see Gravesend the head of a circuit, with three preachers, and more members than he had found on all his Rochester circuit. He wrote to Pawson: "The blessed work of God is going on well in these parts, and our borders are enlarging; but our labors are much increased thereby. When I came into this circuit it was accounted proper for invalids, having only four places included in it. Now it is become the most laborious I ever knew. But our success makes labor sweet; and I bless God I can walk six, ten, sixteen miles, day after day, without much fatigue. The Lord is powerfully at work in this country; our brethren in the Canterbury and Sevenoaks circuits are greatly blessed in their labors. O Jesus, ride on till all are subdued!"

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[1] Smith, II, 5, 4. Meth. Mag., 1819, p. 9.

[2] Mem. of Rev. Joseph Entwisle, chap. 10.

Coke's home missionaries were greatly successful during this period. Being sent beyond the usual limits of the organized circuits, they were pioneers, opening the way for new, or the extension of old circuits. The results of their labors being continually incorporated with the regular work, the names of their districts disappear from the annual Minutes year after year, and those of new fields take their places. As they bore the standard of their cause, for the first time, into many morally desolate regions, they had not a few of those rencounters with mobs which were common with their predecessors of the early itineracy. In 1807 Abraham E. Farrar encountered some of them heroically at Holderness. Thomas Thompson, of Hull, who has already been repeatedly mentioned as a prominent Wesleyan layman of that day, supported this mission. He was born in Holderness, where his father was a humble farmer. Wilberforce became interested in the young man's superior talents and moral worth, and took him into his family. By remarkable business capacity he rapidly rose in the world, becoming a partner in Lord Carrington's Bank, and, at last, a member of Parliament, where he was always a staunch defender of the religious interests of the country especially of the rights of Methodists, and an effective colaborer with Wilberforce and the other "good men of Clapham." His munificent liberality promoted Methodism at home and abroad. Interested for the religious welfare of his native town, he had induced the Conference to establish, at his own expense, the Holderness Mission; but hardly had the missionary begun his labors, before a general persecution broke out, following him from appointment to appointment. He was a young man of excellent talents and refinement, but bore bravely his humiliating trials. Tin kettles and cows' horns were used to drown his voice; stones and other missiles were thrown at him. The doors of the places in which the people assembled for preaching, were fastened by ropes on the outside, sparrows having been first introduced to put out the lights; a fact which was then, as in the primitive Church, made the occasion of foul imputations. Burning assafœtida was sometimes blown upon the congregations. The missionary seldom passed through a village on the Sabbath, without being pursued by a mob of peasantry shouting vulgar epithets at him. Patrington, Welwick, Burton, Pidsea, Ottringham, and Roos were distinguished for proceedings of this character. In many places the opposition succeeded; but, persecuted in one village, the itinerant sought refuge in another. He applied to the magistrate for protection, but this functionary was the minister of Roos, and indirectly encouraged the rioters. They proceeded so far as to assault with stones the house where the preacher was entertained, and he barely escaped uninjured. He appealed to the magistrates of the Petty Sessions, but could not find a man to stand by him there as a witness. Many of the chief inhabitants of his district appeared as witnesses against him, but he made such a defense, and gave such an exposition of Methodism, in the court, that the persecuting rector, who was on the bench, was reprimanded by the presiding officer, and the faithful missionary obtained protection and pursued his work with success. He had still, however, a hard task: his people were poor; he sometimes slept in exposed chambers and damp beds; in one of his appointments his bed was on "the bare beams over a wheelright's shop, with boards just enough for him to stand on, and to which he ascended by a ladder." He often lacked food, and obtained his dinner from the hedges.[3]

The Home Missionaries had now the hardest work and severest trials of the ministry. Joseph Marsh, another young preacher, traveled about this time the Heverstone district, enduring severe hardships, but accomplishing great good. Often, when drenched by storms, he had not convenience for the change of his raiment. He slept in damp beds, and so impaired his health as to be a sufferer through his remaining life. But he was rewarded by the success of his labors; two circuits were afterward organized in his large mission field, and a historian of Methodism records that "almost every village has its neat chapel and its Sunday-school; and from this soil, formerly so barren, men have been raised up and sent into heathen lands to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus."[4]

The home missions in Wales, meanwhile, were rapidly advancing. Coke projected them, as we have seen, in 1800. Before that date the Methodist itinerants in the Principality had preached mostly in English. Coke saw the necessity of laborers who could use the vernacular tongue. John Hughes, who had prepared for the ministry of the national Church, and Owen Davies, who had been in the itineracy about eleven years, both speaking the Welsh language, volunteered to go as missionaries. They were reinforced by additional native laborers from year to year, and soon extended their travels over most of the country, and thus founded the present prosperous Wesleyan Methodism of Wales; for the results of the earlier Wesleyan labors in the Principality had been mostly absorbed into the Calvinistic Methodist societies, in default of native preachers. So successful were these new evangelists that in about four years, after the beginning of the mission Davies wrote to Coke: "The Lord does certainly smile on our mission and honor us with abundant success, and I am encouraged to hope that his word will still run and be glorified. I believe there are more praying people in Wales than there ever were. Therefore am I led to hope that he will rain down righteousness upon us. I am far from considering it a trivial thing to have been able to complete seventeen preaching-houses, and to be engaged in building eleven more; no trivial thing to have raised about four-score societies; no small mercy to have about twenty local and ten traveling preachers to run to and fro in the Principality, that knowledge may increase." During our present period these Cambrian missions advanced rapidly, and in their tenth year reported no less than sixty chapels, with five thousand members of society. Many preachers, local and traveling, were raised up to proclaim the Gospel in the native language.[5] At the end of the decade there were in Wales two districts, twenty-five circuits, and fifty-eight itinerants.[6] Their success was gratefully surprising to the Connection; and they were encouraged by many clergymen of the Establishment, who found that their energetic spirit and lively worship favorably affected their own congregations. "The Welsh mission," wrote Bunting, "is still astonishingly successful. Some of the most serious clergy, who encourage it, if any of our preachers are present, are in the habit of desiring them to stand by the communion-tables, and to give out our hymns, while the sacrament is administering."[7]

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[3] Smith, II., 5. 4. [4] Ibid, II., 5, 4. Wes. Meth. Mag., 1849, p. 283.

William Bramwell labored in various circuits during these years with his usual success. He could never be content without a "revival." Sanctification of heart and life was his incessant theme, but, by promoting personal holiness in the Church, he was sure to promote the conversion of the ungodly. His own deep sanctity was an element of power in his ministrations. At the beginning of this period (1806) he wrote from Sunderland circuit to a fellow-laborer: "I never was so much struck with the word of God as at the present. The truth, its depth, its promises, quite swallow me up. I am lost in wonder and praise. My soul enters into Christ in this blessed book. His own sayings take faster hold of me than ever. I could read and weep, and love and suffer; yea, what could I not suffer when I thus see him? Justification is great, to be cleansed is great; but what is justification or the being cleansed, when compared with this being taken into himself? The world, the noise of self, all is gone; and the mind bears the full stamp of God's image. Here you talk, and walk, and live, doing all in him and to him. Continual prayer, and turning all into Christ, in every house, in every company, all things by him, from him, and to him! If things grow slack, Satan suggests 'Nothing can be done.' I answer, 'Much may be done!' Plowing, sowing, weeding, pruning, may be done; and these will give us hope of a blessed harvest. Go on, do all in love; but go on, never grow weary in well doing." Such was the man; we are not then surprised to find him adding, "The Lord is good to us: I have seen four hundred brought into society, and I believe nearly all saved from evil. The work, I can truly say, is in general deepening through the circuit." Among these hundreds were all kinds of depraved men, including at least a score of soldiers.[8] The revival extended right and left, and the evangelist's soul glowed with increasing ardor. "O this heaven of God's presence!" he writes, "this opening into glory! this weeping over a lost world! this being willing to lay down your life for the Church! 'God is love.' I feel its fire, its burning, as I write. God grant the flame may spread, the glory shine! May the world receive it! Places to me are less than ever. Devoted souls are my delight. Go on, go on; the crown is before you. A few more battles and heaven is won."

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[5] Etheridge's Life of Coke, p. 312. London, 1860.

[6] Minutes, 1815.

Bunting's Life, vol. i., p. 146. London, 1859.

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[8] Life of Bramwell, chap 11.

Such a man could not be unsuccessful. Wherever he went on his circuit, he was as a flame of fire; the wicked trembled, the devout wept for joy, the contrite were comforted. At the beginning of the next year he wrote: "About two hundred joined us the last quarter, sixty of whom were soldiers—lions turned into lambs. Such a work of God in the army I have not seen before; and it spreads. I wonder at the power of God among these men. Seventy now meet in class, and prove to be quite changed. A revival is beginning in several places." On Liverpool, Sheffield, Birstal, and London circuits he labored during these times with similar success, reporting at almost every Conference additions to the societies of not merely scores, but hundreds.

Toward the end of our present period these revivals became still more profound and extensive. The year 1814 will always be memorable, says a Methodist authority, "for one of the most remarkable revivals of religion ever known in this or any country."[9] It commenced in West Cornwall, and spread over most of that peninsula below Truro. At Redruth several persons were awakened in a prayer-meeting; the interest quickly reached the "workhouse," and by the following Sunday it was generally prevalent in the town. Forty members were added that day to the classes. In the afternoon and evening the congregations, at the chapel, exhibited irrepressible emotion, and the supplications of the awakened multitude could not well be concluded until the approach of the next morning. On the following Tuesday, instead of waiting till the usual hour of the evening service, the crowd hastened to the chapel at noon, and the services were continued until the dawn of the next day. More than eighty persons immediately applied for admission to the classes. Throng after throng of others in deep penitence, came to the chapel during the day and the whole of the night. Day after day, and night after night, similar scenes were occurring. The interest spread rapidly from town to town. A youth from Tuckingmill, visiting Redruth, became a subject of the gracious influence; he was the son of a Methodist, and, on returning, found his family about to bow in their family devotions. The news he brought deeply affected them. During the prayer a servant wept and prayed aloud; customers in the shop in front asked liberty to join the devotions, and the scene soon became a prayer-meeting. The crowd at last was so great that they adjourned to the chapel, where the interest was so intense that when the usual hour for preaching arrived the preacher could not proceed, but joined the people in their supplications. By the ensuing Sunday the neighboring villages were generally in excitement. The chapels were crowded, and the universal inquiry was, "What shall we do to be saved?" "Thence it extended east, west, and south, until, in a greater or lesser degree, throughout the whole peninsula from Truro, nearly forty miles long, and from the Lizard to the north coast, every parish was visited and souls were converted to God. In some parts the influence appeared to be more general and abiding than in others; but it seemed as if a mighty and prevalent breeze of saving grace swept over the whole district. The chapels in some places were occupied night and day for a week; in others for two, three, or four weeks. In the towns, although the salutary impression produced was very great, it was less marked than in some of the rural parishes. In the most favored of these there were not more than from ten to twenty persons who were not brought to a great extent under the gracious influence. During the progress of this blessed work, although the chapels were generally sought as the most eligible places of resort, by those who were convinced of their sins and danger, yet the work was not confined to these sanctuaries. The deepest recesses of the mines re-echoed with sounds of prayer to

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[9] Smith, II, 5, 4.

God, and songs of praise for his pardoning mercy. In those gloomy excavations the pious would gather around their penitent comrades until God heard prayer on their behalf, and their mourning was turned into joy. The houses provided for dressing the ores, and preparing them for the market, were often similarly employed. In these places prayer-meetings were frequently held with the most blessed results, and numerous conversions attested the presence and power of God. It was the unanimous opinion of those who fairly observed its progress, whether they were Methodists or otherwise, that this was a great work of God. Throughout the mining district of Redruth and Camborne, where it was most influential, not a whisper was heard expressing a contrary judgment. Indeed, deep seriousness sat on every countenance; and those who never professed to have been brought under religious influence seemed, by their altered and grave demeanor, as if they were awe-stricken in the presence of God."[10]

The results of this extraordinary interest were of such a character as to vindicate it from all aspersions. A local authority says that drunkards became temperate, the fraudulent honest, profane persons devout; that, indeed, the public character of some neighborhoods was quite changed. Six of the circuits, most immediately affected by it, reported, at the next Conference, an increase of members amounting to 5,200, received within five months.

One of the most useful men, not only in Cornwall, but of the whole Connection, during these times, was William Carvosso, who was, for sixty years, a successful class-leader, and whose name is familiar in our day throughout the Methodist world.[11] A diligent student of the Bible, he found in his own profound Christian experience its best commentary. Few men have better comprehended the distinctive doctrine of Christianity respecting saving faith. It was his constant theme, and he had a singularly happy

[10] Smith, II, 5, 6.

[11] Memoirs of William Carvosso, edited by his son. New York, 1843.

manner of simplifying it to dull or darkened minds. Hundreds of anxious inquirers caught from his brief, simple utterances, in conversation or the class-meeting, its mighty significance, and emerged from despondence or trembling weakness into joyful confidence and strength. The scriptural doctrine of sanctification, as taught by the Methodists—sanctification, like justification, by faith—was also a favorite topic with him; and his word was with power, because he not only knew the doctrine, but exemplified it, for threescore years, in a life of unblemished purity and charity.

He was born of poor parents, in 1750, in a humble village of Cornwall, called Mousehole. In early life he lived by fishing and agricultural labors. He says that he was "borne down by the prevailing sins of the age, cock-fighting, wrestling, card-playing, and Sabbath-breaking." His sister heard the Methodists, was converted, and came twelve miles to exhort her family to save their souls. On entering his mother's house, on a Sunday morning, he was surprised to see her and his brother on their knees, while his sister was imploring the grace of God for them. She afterward addressed him in such a manner that he was induced forthwith to go to the Methodist preaching, then held in a private house, and hear for himself. "The word," he says, "quickly reached my heart; the scales fell from my eyes, and I saw I was 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.'" He suffered intense anguish for many days; he abandoned at a stroke all his vicious habits, and prayed night and day for light and consolation. A terrible thought was suggested to his troubled conscience: "The day of grace is past; it is now too late." It is a temptation of the devil, he said to himself. "I am determined, whether I am saved or lost, that while I have breath I will never cease crying for mercy. The very moment I formed this resolution in my heart Christ appeared to me, and God pardoned all my sins, and set my soul at liberty. The Spirit itself now bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God." He never failed to commemorate the date of his deliverance. "It was," he writes, "about nine o'clock at night, May 7, 1771; and never shall I forget that happy hour."

He and his brother now joined the small Methodist class of the village. It included some experienced Christians, who became good guides to him. Among them was Richard Wright, afterward a preacher, and one of the earliest sent by Wesley to America. Carvosso was soon seeking the "perfect love which casteth out fear." An entirely sanctified heart was the conception of true religion which he derived from his earnest reading of the Scriptures. He sought it long, and with many inward struggles; but was enabled at last, in a class-meeting, to perceive that it was to be obtained, like his previous change, by faith alone. "I then received," he says, "the full witness of the Spirit that the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed me from all sin." His whole subsequent life and his blessed death, when nearly eighty-five years old, attested the reality of his experience. In a few years he was appointed a class leader. He afterward removed to a farm in Gluvias, near Ponsanooth, and there commenced that career of public usefulness which has rendered his name historical in his denomination. There was no Methodist chapel in the town; but the itinerants preached once a fortnight at a neighboring farm-house. A little class had been formed, "feeble and destitute," and without a leader. Carvosso's arrival there seemed providential: he became at once the leader of the small band. Two devoted men came to work temporarily in the neighborhood; with them he began a prayer-meeting, and was soon "exhorting;" some of his neighbors were converted, and two of his own children were added to the society. The "barren wilderness began to smile," he writes; before long he had two large classes; the itinerants preached for them twice a week, and the congregations were too large for the place of worship. He projected a chapel, and by his own liberality and his "much begging" it was erected. Another of his children was converted, for whom he had long prayed, as the only member of his family who still remained out of the Church. Years afterward the aged saint, while recording the salvation of his family, says, "While I am writing this the silent tears roll down from my eyes." They were tears of joy, for every one of his household was traveling with him to heaven, and this son, his Benjamin, as he calls him, was proclaiming the word of God in the distant mission field of New South Wales. The good man's happiness seemed complete, and with a grateful heart he devoted himself to still greater labors, and such was the growth of its society that the village chapel could not accommodate the people: it was taken down and a larger one erected.

Soon after these events began (in 1814) "the great revival," as it is still named in Cornwall. It called out all his energy. "It was such a revival," he writes, "as my eyes never saw before. I call it 'a glorious revival,' for such it proved to my own soul; my faith was so increased to see the mighty power of God displayed in convincing and converting such vast multitudes. For this great and merciful visitation numbers will praise God to all eternity. It has been my privilege to witness the happy deaths of many who were brought to the knowledge of the truth at this time. At Ponsanooth we partook largely of the general good." The society, which, twenty-five years before, consisted of one small and feeble class, now became a Church of near two hundred members, divided into eleven classes. Three of these were placed under his own care, and one of them was committed to his youngest son, who had become a local preacher.

He resolved now to devote himself entirely to religious labors, for his industry had secured him a moderate competence. When he entered upon his small farm it was a mere desert, and his neighbors prophesied that he would starve; but in a few years it became, says his biographer, "a favorite spot, exhibiting the happy effects of good management and diligent culture." Thankful for the blessing of God, which had attended him in all his ways, he "retired from the world," as he says, and the remainder of his long life was given wholly to the Church. "Since I have given up the world," he wrote in later years, "my peace has flowed as a river, and my joys have abounded like Jordan's swelling streams." He still retained the charge of his three classes, but "went about doing good," from town to town and circuit to circuit, aiding in revivals, encouraging depressed Churches, and "visiting from house to house," which was perhaps his greatest sphere of usefulness. Many a death-bed was cheered with religious hope under his prayers or sympathetic teachings; hundreds of awakened consciences found consolation and guidance in his apt and scriptural counsels; thousands of weary pilgrims took courage from his words to "go on to perfection."

All Cornwall felt the influence of this devoted man. He was a prayer-leader, class-leader, steward, trustee, but never aspired to be a preacher. "I am a teacher," he said, "but not a preacher; that is a work to which God has not called me." A teacher he was of the first order, in the science of saving souls, writes a Cornish Methodist who knew him well; "for usefulness, perhaps Cornwall has not produced his fellow."[12] He was one of the best examples which modern times has afforded of what was probably the religious life of Christians in the apostolic age, and in those immediately subsequent times during which Christianity, with but few church edifices and comparatively few official teachers, nevertheless overspread the Roman world. He was so holy, so simple, so genial, and charitable, so "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," that the ordinary language of Christian conversation seemed to glow with a new significance when it came from his lips. He was so rich himself in the consolations of faith that they appeared to overflow his soul to all contrite minds which approached him. It is said that by a few minutes' conversation and prayer the whole scenery of the sick man's apartment was often changed:

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[12] Memoir of Carvosso, chap. 8.

t was illuminated as by light from heaven. His early education had been neglected, but, as he advanced in life and usefulness, he learned to write, that he might, by epistolary correspondence, direct the many souls whom his labors had led into the way to heaven. "By this means," says his biographer, "mostly by an effort in the feeblness of his age, his pious influence is found, directly or indirectly, acting powerfully on the minds of thousands distributed in the various places between Saltash and Land's End." In many of the later revivals of Cornwall he was a chief agent, and we shall see him at last, after a long life of extraordinary usefulness, ascending to heaven as in a chariot of fire. At the Conference before he joined the Methodists, the region now included in the Cornish district, extending over about two thirds of Cornwall, had but two circuits, seven preachers, and about two thousand three hundred members; it possessed no Sunday-schools, and but few chapels, and few local preachers; before his death it reported thirteen circuits, twenty-five preachers, nearly three hundred local preachers, more than eighteen thousand members, two hundred and twenty chapels, about fifty-five thousand hearers in its chapels, and nineteen thousand Sunday-scholars. To no one layman was this great prosperity more indebted than to William Carvosso.

Among the most zealous and useful laymen in the revivals of this period were William Clowes, and Hugh and James Bourne, of Staffordshire. They multiplied prayer-meetings, held religious services in the open air, and were instrumental in a wide-spread religious excitement. Their movements occasioned, at last, a result of no little historical importance to Methodism.

About the end of the last century Lorenzo Dow, an eccentric, but earnest Methodist preacher, labored, with no little success, on a long circuit in Vermont, United States of America. Suddenly seized with an impression that he should visit Ireland to preach to the Papists, he put up a bush as a sail in a leaking canoe, passed down the Mussisque River, and making his way to Canada, embarked for Europe.[13] He was thus voluntarily placed beyond the pale of his denomination, and thenceforward was known as an independent itinerant. His travels and labors subsequently rendered his name and eccentricities familiar, not only in his own country, but throughout most of the English world. After hard labors in Ireland he returned, traversed the United States, and again crossing the ocean, found, in 1807, a general religious interest in Staffordshire. He suggested to the zealous people the plan of camp-meetings, which were proving so convenient and effective in the western wilds of America, where but few chapels of any denomination then existed. They immediately adopted it. A flag was hoisted on Mow Hill; the population gathered to it from all the surrounding regions, and the first English camp-meeting was held. Clowes, who was a local preacher, took an active part in its exercises, and records that a mighty influence attended them.[14] Many such meetings followed. Hugh Bourne thought that he perceived in them a providential means of reaching multitudes of the people who could not otherwise be brought under religious influence. He vindicated them in a pamphlet; counter publications were issued by the preachers of Burslem and Macclesfield circuits. Many excesses, it was alleged, attended such out-door services; and the Conference in 1807 declared, "It is our judgment that, even supposing such meetings to be allowable in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief, and we disclaim connection with them."[15] Their advocates, however, continued to hold them. Hugh Bourne, who was not a preacher, but a chapel trustee, yet, like most Methodist laymen of that day, a zealous laborer in social meetings, went to and fro in Lancashire and Cheshire, as well as

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[13] Memoirs of Introd. of Methodism in the Eastern States, chap. 33. Boston, 1848.

[14] Life of the venerable William Clowes, etc., by John Davison, chap. 6. London, 1854.

[15] Meth. Mag., 1807. p. 432.

Staffordshire, arousing the people with his exhortations and prayers. In 1808 he was expelled from the Connection by the Burslem Quarterly Meeting. Two years later, Clowes, who continued to attend the camp-meetings, was also expelled. He commenced a course of home missionary labors, giving up his business for the purpose. Classes were formed, and in 1810 dates the epoch of the "Primitive Methodist" denomination. They preached in market-places and on the highways, as well as at camp-meetings; and allowed women to preach. A schism which had taken place in Manchester circuit, and included, in Lancashire and Cheshire, sixteen congregations and twenty-eight preachers, was mostly absorbed by the new Church.[16] The latter spread rapidly; its piety and devoted laborers won for it a useful popular influence, notwithstanding its alleged excesses; it has been an unquestionable blessing to the lower classes of the country generally, and has spread not only over much of Great Britain and Ireland, but into Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania. It is noted for its devout simplicity, its zeal, its humble and indefatigable labors, and its success. Methodists, of whatever party, may well excuse what they deem objectionable in its early history, and gratefully recognize it as one of the most important results of the revivals in this period of their annals.

Mary Fletcher prosecuted her modest and useful labors throughout the whole of this period in Madeley and its vicinity. The posthumous influence of her husband there has already been mentioned.[17] Near the beginning of this decade a traveling preacher observed that such a spirit of piety prevailed for several miles in and about Madeley as he had nowhere else witnessed. The saintly vicar's influence was perpetuated in the person of his wife for thirty years after his death. Her home at Madeley was a sanctuary to the poor, to devout women, and to the itinerant evangelists. Many are the allusions in the contemporary Methodist biographies to its Christian hospitality, its instructive conversations about the deep things of God, its frequent meetings for prayer and Scripture exposition by its aged hostess. She suffered much from ill health, but continued her preaching in the neighboring hamlets as well as at home. She enjoyed her declining years, for they were sunny with light from heaven. "Of all my situations," she wrote in 1809, alluding to the various stages of her life, "none hath been equal to this. O the loving-kindness of my God! I am in a most peaceful habitation; and some of the clusters of grapes from Canaan I do taste of, and sit as on the banks of Jordan, waiting to be brought over."[18] She commemorated yearly, by holy exercises, the anniversaries of her wedding and her husband's death. On the 12th of November, in this year, she wrote: "Twenty-eight years this day, and at this hour, I gave my hand and heart to John William de la Flechere. A profitable and blessed period of my life! I feel at this moment a more tender affection toward him than I did at that time, and by faith I now join my hand afresh with his." She believed that his beloved spirit still communed with hers, and she lived in habitual readiness to rejoin him. Her sufferings increased as she advanced toward her end; but she was able to write as late as July, 1814: "How tenderly the Lord deals with me! I am very weak, and yet am oft five times in a week able to be in my meetings, and I have strength to speak so that all may hear, and the Lord is very present with us. Lord, fill my soul with abundant praise!"

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[16] Bunting's Life, I, 13.

[17] Vol. i, book v, chap. 9.

She begins the next year, the seventy-sixth of her age, with the record, "O I long that the year fifteen may be the best of all my life." She was not to be disappointed, for it was to conclude her long pilgrimage. On the 14th of the ensuing August she writes: "Thirty years this day I drank the bitter cup, and closed the eyes of my beloved husband; and now I am myself in a dying state. Lord, prepare me! I feel death very near. My soul doth wait, and long to fly to the bosom of my God! Come, my adorable Saviour! I lie at thy feet."

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[18] Moore's Life of Mary Fletcher, part 8.

The closing scene of her life became more solemnly beautiful as its end approached. With increasing illness she continued her Christian labors: "It is as if every meeting would take away my life," she says; "but I will speak to them while I have my breath." On the 27th of September she writes. "O show thy lovely face! Draw me more close to thyself! I long, I wait for a closer union. It is amazing under how many complaints I still live. But they are held by the hand of the Lord. On the Monday evenings I have had some power to read and speak at the rooms till the nights grow dark; but on Sunday noon I have yet liberty, though my eyes are so bad. The Lord helps me wonderfully. In the class also, in the morning, the Lord doth help." About a month later (October 26) she says: "I have had a bad night; but asking help of the Lord for closer communion, my precious Lord applied that word, 'I have borne thy sins in my own body on the tree.' I felt his presence. I seem very near death; but I long to fly into the arms of my beloved Lord. I feel his loving-kindness surrounds me." Such was the last entry in her Journal. On the 9th of December she entered into her eternal rest. "I am drawing near to glory;" "There is my home and portion fair;" "Jesus, come, my hope of glory;" "He lifts his hands and shows that I am graven there," were among her last utterances. "The Lord bless both thee and me," she said to a Christian friend, and died. "Her countenance," writes this lady, "was as sweet a one as was ever seen in death. There was at the last neither sigh, groan, or struggle; and she had all the appearance of a person in the most composed slumber."

Like her husband, she was mourned by the whole surrounding community, for she had been "a burning and a shining light" among them. Not only by her public labors, but by her visits to the afflicted and her charities had she endeared herself to them. Her chief, if not her only fault, was her too rigorous self-denial for their relief. A friend who made up her accounts for her last year, reports that her whole expenditure, on her own apparel, amounted to nineteen shillings and sixpence. "Her expenses were not always so small," it is added, "but they never amounted to five pounds per annum." Her "poor account" for the same year amounted to nearly one hundred and eighty-two pounds. She lived only for eternity, and thereby attained a happy life in both worlds. Her preaching is described as instructive and impressive, and the good results of the neighboring places of worship, established and supplied by her husband and herself, long remained visible. Some time after her death Entwisle visited Madeley. "I preached," he wrote, "in the Tythe Barn, adjoining to the vicarage, which was furnished with benches and a desk, with a gallery at one end, by Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. Hundreds of people were stowed together, insomuch that I could scarcely squeeze through them to the desk. The barn seems to have been built two hundred years; it is open to the roof, thatched with straw, and all the windows, except one, are made of oiled paper. My soul was filled with a pleasingly awful sense of the divine presence; and the recollection of the blessed couple (though I never saw their faces) helped me while I spoke. It is easy to preach here: I could have continued all night. The apparent seriousness, earnestness, and zeal of the people were delightful." He preached also at Colebrook Dale on a week-day, where hundreds crowded to hear him. Fletcher had provided this chapel, and hewed out of the solid rock, with his own hands, the first stone for it. "When I thought," says the visitor, "here Fletcher lived and labored, I breathed after his spirit. O may I follow him as he followed Christ!" The same evening he preached in the chapel in Madeley Wood to an immense crowd, who still testified, by their earnest spirit, to the abiding influence of the two departed saints who had rendered their rural parish memorable and hallowed. He adds: "This chapel was also erected by Fletcher as also another by Mary Fletcher in another part of the parish; so that three Methodist chapels are provided in Madeley parish by that blessed couple, in which it is hoped the Gospel will be preached for centuries; and if the vicarage barn be not used, another chapel will be built in its stead. The present curate showed me the vicarage, the church, Fletcher's entries of baptisms and burials, and his tomb. Everything about Fletcher is interesting to me. I talked to the curate about his soul, and what I said was attended with the divine blessing; he went home weeping and praying. To God be the glory! To all eternity I hope to praise God for my visit to the parish where Fletcher labored and died. O may I partake of his spirit more and more! His parishioners seem to have a good degree of it. Perhaps to the end of time the fruit of his labors will remain, and his memory be precious."[19]

For nearly half a century the record of Mary Fletcher's saintly career has been a familiar book in Methodist families throughout the world, and has tended to perpetuate among them the primitive spirit of the denomination.

A few months before her death, died one of her friends, one of the few of noble rank whom Methodism had rescued from the irreligion of the fashionable life of the day, and who was mourned with sincere affection by the Wesleyan community. Lady Mary Fitzgerald had seen a large circle of her aristocratic kindred wrecked by the vices of the times. Few families of the nobility presented, in that day, more melancholy examples of moral self-ruin. Three of her brothers were successively Earls of Bristol; one became infamous by his domestic life; another died in dishonor, a deposed bishop. One of her own sons, carried away by the tide of aristocratic profligacy, shot his coachman and was publicly hanged.[20] Her husband sunk under the tide of the prevalent corruption, and she was compelled to seek the protection of the law against his vices. Lady Mary was the daughter of John, Lord Hervey, and granddaughter of John, Earl of Bristol; her high position in society, and at court as Lady of the Bed-chamber to the Princess Amelia Sophia, gave her ample means of estimating the hollow life and moral wretchedness of the fashionable world. In the prime of her days she turned from the glittering scene to the devout men and women who, under the common title of Methodists, were attempting to recall the country to better views of its acknowledged faith. She joined one of Wesley's societies, became a correspondent of Venn, Fletcher, Brackenbury, and other leaders of the Methodist movement, and an ornament to the circle of "elect ladies" which gathered around the Countess of Huntingdon. During the visit of Fletcher and his wife to Dublin, she was a guest with them at the same hospitable house, and their friendship was terminated only by death. At the division between the Arminian and Calvinistic Methodists she adhered to Wesley, and, notwithstanding her exalted rank, lived and died one of the most exemplary members of the Connection. An eminent divine of the Establishment says that she joined herself to the company of the most excellent Christians of whom she could hear, and became "a companion of all them that fear God and keep his righteous judgments;" that she "walked in newness of life," from "newness of spirit;" and a new creed, a new circle of acquaintance, and attendance on places of worship of a new description, constituted but a very small part even of her outward change; that the employment of her whole time and of her wealth, her conduct and converse in all the relations of life, and toward persons of all ranks and characters, were totally altered; that as far as her situation in the attendance of a princess would permit, everything splendid or expensive was wholly renounced; all the pomp and decorations attached to her rank were given up, and a style of simplicity adopted, in all particulars, far beyond what is usual among inferior professors of the same holy truths, indeed even more than in most instances would be desirable; but in her case the entire consistency of her conduct prevented all possibility of misconception. "From the time when I first had the honor and pleasure of becoming acquainted with her," adds this authority, "she was, in my judgment, as dead to the world and everything in it, as any person with whom I ever conversed."[21]

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[19] Mem. of Entwisle, chap. 13.

[20] Life of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, II, 37.

Like her friend at Madeley she abounded in alms. She retrenched all superfluous expenses, and her whole income, above her own necessities, was devoted to the poor and to religious charities. She is described as "indeed harmless and blameless," "without rebuke," "shining as a light in the world, as even they allowed who were by no means favorable to her religious sentiments: an example of meekness, affection, and propriety of conduct in all the relations of life, so that 'they who were of the contrary part had no evil thing to say of her.'" The same writer speaks of the influence of her religious conversation as singularly impressive, and says: "Indeed, I scarcely ever experienced such an effect from any book or sermon however excellent. There was, as it appeared to me, a sort of heavenly atmosphere around her." "I have known this excellent lady," wrote another of her friends, "above twenty years, and never saw her superior in humility, charity, and entire devotedness to God. Her conversation, her thoughts, her affections were in heaven." She remained, to an extreme age, an admirable example of the elder Methodism, and loved it and its founder so ardently as to order, in her will, that her corpse should be interred in the City Road Chapel burying-ground, among the dead who were endeared to her by associations more precious than those which belonged to the sepulchres of her titled kindred. Benson visited her a short time before her death. "She is now become," he wrote, "exceeding feeble, sinking fast into the grave. But her faculties do not seem much if any impaired, save her hearing, which is very imperfect; and the graces of God's Spirit, especially humility, resignation, and patience, are in lively exercise. She is evidently ripening fast for glory; and, I doubt not, whenever she is called, will change mortality for life. Happy was the choice she made when she gave up the gay world and the pleasures of a court for the cross and the reproach of Christ." She died a painful but blessed death. On the 8th of April, 1815, when she was nearly ninety years old, her clothes caught fire, and her servants, hastening to her, found her wrapped in flames. She lingered till the next day with a faith which triumphed over her agonies. "I might as well go home this way as any other," she said to her family. Her last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus! my blessed Redeemer, come and receive my spirit." A monument,[22] placed by her family in City Road Chapel, commemorates her virtues, and testifies to the Methodists of our day, the fidelity of this high-born lady to their cause, in the times when their name was an epithet of reproach and scorn.

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[21] Rev. Thomas Scott, who preached and published her funeral sermon. Extracts are given in the Meth. Mag., 1815, p. 522.

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[22] This monument adorns the southeast corner of City Road Chapel. It was erected as a "tribute of affection and veneration by her grandson, Lieut. Col. Thomas George Fitzgerald." See Raithby Hall: Memorial Sketches of Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., by Mrs. Richard Smith, p. 64. London, 1859.

CHAPTER IX.

PROGRESS OF METHODISM FROM 1815 TO 1825.

Presidents of the Conference — The Annual Minutes — Advanced Position of Methodism — Great Statistical Growth — Proceedings of the Conference — Missionary Development — Spiritual Improvement — Deaths of Preachers — Richard Rodda — George Shadford — John Barber — Samuel Bradburn — His Services and Trials — Thomas Taylor — George Story — His Peculiar Spiritual History — He turns Philosopher — Tries Fashionable Gayeties — Becomes a Deist — Turns Methodist — Becomes an Itinerant — Dies in Peace — Raithby Hall — Robert Carr Brackenbury — His Character and Usefulness — Sarah Brackenbury — Death of Samuel Bardsley, the Oldest Itinerant — Joseph Benson — His Services.

The presidents of the Conference, during the decade from 1815 to 1825, were successively, Richard Reece, John Gaulter, Jonathan Edmondson, Jonathan Crowther, Jabez Bunting, George Marsden, Adam Clarke, Henry Moore, Robert Newton, and Joseph Entwisle.

Aside from the obituary notices, the Minutes present in these ten years scarcely an item of popular interest. They consist mostly of schedules of appointments, statistics, financial schemes and committees, the annual Addresses to the societies and to the Irish Conference, and the quadrennial letters from and to the American General Conference. They are, however, more than ever historically significant: the ministerial roll enlarges rapidly; the Mission appointments become an important roll of themselves, occupying a third more space, yearly, than the whole list of appointments in the last year of Wesley's life. The various funds, with their "Connectional collections," are methodically presented; they are now the financial substructure of the ecclesiastical edifice, and the systematic mind of Bunting, who has been secretary for years, is seen on every page of their reports. The Minutes of three sessions occupy, in print, many more pages than all the proceedings of all the forty-seven annual sessions held during Wesley's life, not excepting the long theological and other discussions of the latter. Wesleyan Methodism is, in fine a great organic system, a Church, consolidated at home and constantly extending abroad; comprehending, in its stated ministrations, the United Kingdom; reaching, by its missionary agencies, France, Spain, Malta, North America, the West Indies, Western and Southern Africa, Ceylon, continental India, and the South Sea Islands. Settled in its policy, thoroughly organized in its financial and missionary operations, if it affords us, at least in its domestic affairs, fewer interesting incidents to record than heretofore, it impresses us more than ever as a grand aggregate result of the marvelous events and heroic labors which have hitherto crowded its history. Standing at the close of the first quarter of the new century, and contemplating it in its denominational organization and extension, and its effects on British and American Protestantism generally, the historical student is compelled to recognize it as a grand development of Christianity, an established and invincible fact, no longer liable to fatal contingencies, and henceforth more important prospectively than retrospectively.

Its statistical results, at the close of these ten years, startle us with grateful surprise, and prove that the men, mostly poor and untutored, but heroic and saintly, who had prosecuted the singular movement, were indeed fitted to be classed with those, so similar in condition and character, who anciently "turned the world upside down." The members in the societies increased from 230,948 in 1815, to 283,057 in 1825,[1] exclusive of the itinerant preachers; a gain of 52,109. The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States advanced, meanwhile, from 211,165 to 348,195, an increase of 137,030. Its gains were much more than double those of the parent body. The aggregate increase of the two Churches was 189,139, an average per year of 18,914

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[1] Minutes, vol. vi, p. 47.

Though the average growth of the Wesleyan body was less during this decade than in the preceding ten years, the average gain of Methodism in both countries was greater. In the New World it had an ampler and more necessitous field. It was spreading there as rapidly as emigration itself. In 1819 it reported 2,711 members less than the parent Church;[2] but in 1820 it stepped to the front of the great "movement" with a majority of 17,431.[3] Thenceforward Methodism was to have its chief numerical triumphs in the American Republic. The Wesleyan Conference included in its statistics British North America and the West Indies; detaching these, Methodism in the Western hemisphere already (in 1825) presented a majority of 48,497 over all the Methodism of the Eastern hemisphere, including the missions of Africa, India, and the South Sea Islands. In this first quarter of the century the members of Methodist societies throughout the world increased from 188,522 to 631,252.

The returns of members do not include the statistics of the ministry. The Wesleyan ministry advanced in the present decade from 942 to 1,083, a gain of 141, and an average gain of more than 14 each year. The traveling ministry in the United States of America advanced in the same time from 704 to 1,314, a gain of 610, and an average gain per year of 61. The aggregate Methodist ministry throughout the world was now 2,397, not including the many thousands of local preachers in both hemispheres.[4]

We hardly discover an important modification of the polity of the Church in all the Minutes of this period. Among the few improvements, we find the Conference of 1816 ordain-

[2] Correct American Minutes of 1819, by Minutes of 1820, vol. i, p. 126. There was an error in the former of 700, in the returns from the Halifax circuit.

[3] The American Minutes show a larger majority, but they are inaccurate. See Bangs's Hist., vol. iii, p. 184.

[4] The local preachers were not yet reported.

ing that, in case of the death of its president in the interim of its sessions, the last surviving president shall immediately resume the office, with all its authority and responsibilities. In 1817 it is enacted that no excluded preacher shall be allowed to become a local preacher, class-leader, or even a private member, without the previous consent of the Conference. In 1818 the Chapel Fund is formed for the relief of embarrassed Churches, and the next year it is announced, in the Pastoral Address, with "great satisfaction," that the moneys thus raised were found, at the meeting of the committee for their disbursement, nearly equal to the claims for deficient interest of moneys borrowed on the chapels, regularly recommended from the different districts; and that the fund is therefore now established as a successful institution of Methodism. In 1819 it is determined that an annual Pastoral Address to the societies shall be issued, beginning with this session; it is to be read in all the chapels. In 1820 John Emory is received by the Conference as the first delegated representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and a periodical delegated visitation, between the two bodies, is permanently established. In 1823 Richard Reece and John Hannah are sent to America to reciprocate the courtesy of the American General Conference. In 1824 it is ordered that the 19th of September, 1825, shall be celebrated as the centenary of John Wesley's "entrance into the work of the Christian ministry," by religious services in all the Methodist societies, and by a general public collection, which is to be expended in the erection of a Mission House in London.

But the most important indication in these Minutes is the continued missionary development of Methodism. It is rapidly becoming the predominant characteristic of the denomination. The events which immediately followed the death of Coke gave it organization, as we have seen; it now begins to project its energy in all directions. In 1816 the Conference, "in compliance with pressing requests received from abroad, and in humble dependence on the blessing of God," authorizes the appointment of twenty-three additional laborers to France, Brussels, Africa, Ceylon, the West Indies, the Canadas, and Newfoundland. The next year seventeen more are authorized to be sent out, besides twelve who are to supply vacancies in the West Indies occasioned by the death or return of missionaries. The formation of district missionary societies throughout the Connection is urged; mission house premises in London are to be provided; a Plan of a General Wesleyan Missionary Society is approved, and the Executive Committee is instructed to take measures for carrying it into full effect. In 1821 the Conference consents, in consequence, of the growing extent of its "missionary concerns," that two out of the three preachers annually appointed, as its missionary secretaries, shall be "wholly employed, on the week days, in the service of that institution;" and the Pastoral Address says: "The work has spread from the West Indies and the British American Colonies, the scenes of our earliest missionary exertions, into West and South Africa, Ceylon and Continental India, and the Pacific Ocean. In all these stations religious societies have been raised up, regulated by our Discipline, nourished by salutary doctrine, and watched over by men approved among us, as 'the messengers of our Churches and the glory of Christ.' We give thanks to God on this account, and for opportunities still opening before us for preaching to a greater extent the knowledge of Christ among the heathen. Methodism was from the first thus connected in its hopes and energies with the salvation of the whole world. This object inspired the efforts of our venerable Founder; it glows in the hymns which the consecrated genius of his brother furnished for our religious services; our system at once impels to comprehensive efforts, and affords an admirably adapted instrument for consolidating and perpetuating the success which is given to the preaching of the Gospel, and for raising up the instruments by whom it will be carried on and extended from year to year."

In the last year of the decade the plan of annual deputations of preachers and laymen, to assist at the missionary anniversaries in the country, having been unsuccessfully attempted before, was resumed with such improvements as have rendered it permanent. The missionary interest was thus becoming universal in the Connection, and Methodism was fast assuming its noblest historical phase as a system of universal evangelization, a fact which will claim distinct attention hereafter.

Meanwhile its leaders guarded carefully its spiritual character, as essential to its work of general propagandism. Their Pastoral Addresses, from year to year, enforced holiness of heart and life, and incessantly recalled attention to the moral discipline of the Church. In 1820 the Conference asked the question, "What measures can we adopt for the increase of spiritual religion among our societies?" The preachers covenanted together to seek greater consecration of themselves and their families to God, to proclaim more the "vital doctrines of the Gospel," and to give themselves exclusively to their one work of saving souls. They resolved "to *preach out of doors*, seeking, in order to save, that which is lost," and "to try again places which have not recently been visited." "Let us not be satisfied," they voted, "till every town, village, and hamlet in our respective neighborhoods shall be blessed, as far as we can possibly accomplish it, with the means of grace and salvation; in a word, let *every* Methodist preacher consider himself as called to be, in point of enterprise, zeal, and diligence, a *home missionary*, and to *enlarge* and extend, as well as *keep*, the circuit to which he is appointed." They resolved to multiply prayer-meetings in neglected regions, sending prayer-leaders to conduct them; and to promote watch-nights, private and public bands, and days for solemn fasting and prayer.

Six pages of the Minutes of this one session are occupied with these practical plans of spiritual usefulness. This year the domestic societies reported a decrease of 4,688 members, a fact which probably led to heart-searchings and to these resolutions. They had effect; for at the next session the reported increase was more than 10,000, the gains in the domestic societies being nearly 8,000. This success was reviewed at the session of 1821, when the Conference expressed itself "thankful to receive such cheering and encouraging information from various parts of the Connection," and repeated its exhortations to consecration and diligence, urging particularly increased pastoral labors; and, "in all cases, where practicable, the establishment and superintendence of prayer-meetings in private houses, as being calculated not only to call into exercise the gifts of the people, and to promote their religious improvement, but also to awaken the attention of the ignorant and profligate to the concerns of their souls." Preaching in private houses, and especially in the cottages of the poor, and the distribution of religious tracts were also recommended. Doubtless as a result, in part, of these measures the increase in Great Britain alone, reported at the next Conference, was 11,318.

The losses in the ministry, in the ten years from 1815 to 1825, were no less than 193; 150 of these were by death; the remainder were cases of "location," occasioned mostly by ill health or pecuniary embarrassment.

Among the many who fell at their posts was Richard Rodda, whom we have seen beginning his ministry on the steps of the Town Hall at Bishop's Castle, and have followed through a series of the old ministerial trials to a death of triumph, occasioned by his labors and hardships.[4] He died October 30, 1815, aged seventy-two, after thirty-three years of itinerant life. George Shadford, one of the heroes of American as well as of English Methodism, died shouting "Victory! victory through the blood of the Lamb!" on the 11th of March, 1816, in the seventy-eighth year of his age and forty-eighth of his ministry.[5] John Barber, who traveled thirty-five years, and was twice elected President of the Conference, died in great suffering, but much peace, April 28, 1816, in the fifty-ninth year of his age;[6] a man of "peculiar comprehenson of mind, of inflexible firmness of character, and distinguished in every part of his conduct," say his brethren in the Minutes.[7]

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[4] Vol. ii, book v, chap. 4.

[5] He will receive fuller attention in the History of Methodism in the United States of America.

The "Wesleyan Demosthenes," Samuel Bradburn, departed to his rest July 26, 1815. He has already been sketched in our pages.[8] He traveled about forty-two years; his brethren record, in his obituary, his "extraordinary gifts" and "remarkable popularity;" he was considered, they say, "one of the first preachers in the land for all the higher powers of persuasive eloquence." He was probably the most extraordinary natural orator that has appeared in the Wesleyan ministry—the Patrick Henry of Methodism—abrupt, passionate, sublime, overwhelming; "treading the pulpit floor with the assured air of an habitual conqueror." His father, a soldier, had been one of the hearers of John Haime, and his Methodist associates, in the camp of Flanders;[9] and it is said that, though he did not personally join them, he began to lead a new life, and trained afterward his thirteen children in the fear of God.[10] It is not improbable, therefore, that, in addition to the many other results, heretofore noticed, of the labors of those military evangelists, Methodism owes indirectly to them, the ministry of this its greatest orator. His deep sensibilities were revealed through all his Christian life. His first religious impressions were intense. He roamed about the fields in distress

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[6] Meth. Mag., 1818, pp. 241, 321.

[7] Minutes of 1816. "Perhaps few men ever left behind them a deeper impression of true and tender kindness of heart. When quite a child I was astonished to see my father weep over the letter which announced the death of his old pastor and friend. He followed him to his grave at Portland Chapel, Bristol, preached his funeral sermon, and acted as one of his executors." Bunting's Life, vol. i, p. 81. The tears of such a man as Bunting are the highest eulogy.

[8] Vol. ii, book v, chap 5.

[9] See vol. i, book iii, chap. 1; and Bunting's Life, i, chap. 5

[10] Life of Bunting, vol. i, chap. 6.

"till the winds and rain almost caused the skin to peel off his cheeks;" he "fasted to an extreme;" he often sat on the side of a ditch, with his feet in cold water, "till the pain nearly took away his senses; and read religious books, but daily grew more wretched." At last, failing in all these attempts to relieve his troubled conscience, "I exclaimed," he says, "in the bitterness of my soul, Lord Jesus Christ thou didst die for sinners; if there be yet mercy for me, O reveal thy love in my poor, tormented heart."[11] Thus driven to the only way of salvation, he found rest to his soul. Joining the Methodists, it was not very long before he began to preach; but he trembled under the responsibility of the pulpit, and doubted his divine call to it. "Go forward in the work of the Lord," said Fletcher of Madeley to him: "if you should live to preach the Gospel forty years and save but one soul, it will be worth all your labors." Allusions to his eloquence abound in contemporary publications. It must have been of the loftiest character, Hebraic in its grandeur. Watson, as we have seen, felt it "thrilling every nerve of his frame," though the great theologian was a man of sober, if not impassive feelings. Half a century after hearing him, a brother itinerant speaks of the strong impressions produced by the "majesty and variety of his delivery," of his style as easy, yet masterly, and of the singular, the "exquisite purity and beauty of his pronunciation; words, tones, cadences, all at once manly and melodious." He heard him deliver a discourse, in which the phrase the "Eternal Son" occurred several times, and adds that he never since heard those words, or any others, uttered with such majestic effect.[12] Bradburn, like Whitefield, had that eloquence of heart which not only gives character to thought, but to vocal tones, as melody in the soul utters itself not only in poetry but in music.

Like most men of similar genius, he was a mystery to himself; subject to internal struggles which men of less sensibility could not comprehend; wrestling sometimes with even the "dark demon of insanity itself." In 1799 he was elected President of the Conference; three years afterward a mournful spectacle was presented in that body. "The solitary instance in our annals," says a Methodist writer, "of an ex-president being so humbled, he stood a culprit at the bar (wine 'biteth like a serpent') and received its solemn censure; and it was ordered that his name should not appear on the Minutes of the year. Few survive who witnessed the scene, the heart-grief of those who sat in judgment on a father 'overtaken in a fault,' and the deep, ingenuous penitence of the offender, as he blessed God for the discipline which had punished his offense, and even thanked the men upon whom the duty of detecting and of reporting it had fallen. After the interval of a year he was restored to his former standing."[13] His brethren loved, pitied, revered him too much to allude in their Minutes to his humiliation, so nobly borne.[14] If we respect their rigorous regard for discipline in his treatment, we reverence the humility with which his manly and lofty spirit bowed before it. It has been doubted, indeed, whether they did not deal too harshly with him.[15] The use of wine was common at that day in England. Bradburn had suffered in his mental faculties by a severe attack of fever; they had always shown symptoms of partial insanity, and were now incurably affected. His fall was brief, and in these circumstances certainly called for all the sympathy shown him by the Conference, if not for more. Christian discipline is so far different from the administration of justice in the state, that its office is rather to reclaim than to punish; and if, in this instance, it was important that it should be exemplary, yet the history of the denomination could have recorded the case of Bradburn, not only without harm, but with honor alike to the Conference and to public morals, had it been able to say that when he stood before its bar, bending under the weight of infirmities and of most honorable services, stricken with grief, condemning himself, thanking his accusers, and not even pleading his shattered faculties as an apology, his brethren had accepted his repentance and refused to degrade him. He labored faithfully, but with broken health and a broken heart, the remainder of his days. For a few of the last years of his life, say the Minutes, his strength and memory gradually failed him; but it was gratifying to his friends to observe that, as he drew near to the eternal world, he became more spiritually minded and more deeply serious. In the last letter he ever wrote, he remarked, that though he was unable to preach, "he found that the Lord Jesus Christ was his all." On the 24th of July, 1815, he was seized with a fit and died, unable to speak, while his family stood weeping around his bed—a great, good, and suffering man, a gigantic soul, whose eccentricities were more than redeemed by his splendid talents, and whose temporary fall was made the occasion of an affecting exemplification of his genuine Christian character.

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[11] Life of Bunting, vol. i, chap. 6.

[12] Rev. Isaac Keeling. Bunting's Life, vol. i, App. F.

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[13] Life of Bunting, vol. i, chap. 6.

[14] If Bunting's biographer is correct, respecting the "order" that his name should be struck from the Minutes, that order was not executed; his name appears as usual, but with a merely nominal appointment, as I suppose, at Plymouth Dock, under Joseph Bradford, where Bradburn had been chairman of the district the preceding year.

[15] "I am afraid," says a Wesleyan Preacher, "that when he was degraded a harsh thing was done, and that he received hard measure." Life of Bunting, vol. i, ch. 6.

Thomas Taylor has often appeared in our pages, and his "itinerant adventures" in Scotland have been somewhat minutely narrated.[16] On the 16th of October, 1816, he also entered into his everlasting rest, in the seventy-ninth year of his age, and the fifty-sixth of his ministry. Though he had to suffer, in his early career, the assaults of mobs, "hunger, cold, weariness, and persecution," yet he "met and surmounted them with a truly apostolic intrepidity," say his brethren in mourning his loss.[17] His discourses were always short, but remarkable for their fervor and power. He had a quick temper, but it was so habitually under the subduing influence of divine grace as to be rarely percepti

[16] Vol. i, b. 4, ch. 5.

[17] Minutes, 1817.

ble, even to his most intimate friends; and, surest proof of a kindly and noble nature, he showed in the decline of his life an increasing "heavenly sweetness of spirit, which was seldom interrupted." The Minutes describe him as in "the highest class of the servants of God," not only by his talents, successes, and brave endurance, but, "above all, by his close and constant walk with God." He was a tall, muscular man; he labored with great vigor; and, when broken by age, could not wholly retreat from his favorite work. A few years before his death he wrote to Newton: "I am obliged to take very short stages on horseback; it takes me a long time to make a short journey. I used to travel from Sheffield to Nottingham to dinner, and now it is a three days' journey. Such is the result of forty-nine years' traveling, and often, in the beginning, with cold rooms and damp beds. Yet all is too little for so good, so kind, and patient a Master. I am the last of the poor old pioneers, for my company has gone before, and I hope to overtake them. Now, my brother, you have the honor of being a soldier in the grand army. Fight the good fight of faith."[18] These words were characteristic. "I should like to die like an old soldier, sword in hand!" he exclaimed in the pulpit shortly before he died.

In the obituary of 1818 appears the name of another of Wesley's veterans, a character of peculiar interest to the contemplative reader, George Story. Had he lived in the days of Plato, the great Athenian thinker would have had no fonder companion in his walks in the groves of the Academy, and no more admirable example of his doctrines among the youth of Attica. A writer, whose honest but mistaken views of Methodism have rendered his sketches of its early preachers rather caricatures than portraits, has admitted that "no man found his way into the Methodist Connection in a quieter manner, nor brought with him a finer and more reasonable mind, than George Story."[19] He was a philosopher in the character of a Methodist. The story of his inward life reveals the struggles, the problems of the highest meditative minds, and, what is infinitely more important, reveals, if not the solution of such problems, yet their proper practical treatment in order to secure rest to the soul.

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[18] Jackson's Life of Newton, ch. 4.

[19] Robert Southey. Life of Wesley, vol. ii, chap. 18 "There is not, in the whole hagiography of Methodism, a more interesting or more re-

George Story was born at Harthill, Yorkshire, in 1738. His childhood was thoughtful and virtuous. Without morbid sensibility, he had such a fine discernment of right and wrong, such moral logic, if it may be so called, that he saw folly in what most men consider the chief interests of their lives, revolting cruelty in what they deem but venial insensibility, and caricatures of the obvious designs of existence in most of their fashionable conventionalities. Of a calm temperament, serene, yet inquiring, he looked dispassionately at the ordinary life of the world, and saw that it was a profound, a universal practical solecism, incompatible with any higher destiny, and incompatible with its sad fate if it had no such destiny. His character was, doubtless, owing much to the natural constitution of his mind, but much also to his education. His early training was religious, for his parents were devout, quiet people, though, he says, tedious in their moral instructions. His parish minister was a worthy, venerable man, whose sermons often deeply impressed the studious mind of the child. The scenes of nature were suggestive to him, and he felt a "solemn delight" in its stormy exhibitions, in thunder and lightning, as a display of the majesty of the Creator. He was affected by the innocence and sufferings of inferior living creatures, and when he killed a bird, by a stone, he felt deep remorse, which could find relief, after nights of wakefulness, only in prayer for forgiveness. He believed that, early in life, he received the justifying grace of God, but having

markable case than this. Living among the most enthusiastic Methodists, enrolled among them, and acting and preaching with them for more than fifty years, George Story never became an enthusiast; his nature seems not to have been susceptible of the contagion."

no suitable guides, he lost it. He read with avidity, and being employed in a book shop he devoured its contents of every kind. Books were on his table at meals, and in his chamber at night. He pored over them late, and rose at dawn to resume their agreeable company. He thus acquired no small amount of information in most of the sciences. He read the lives of the ancient philosophers with peculiar interest, and for a time accepted them as his instructors and models. But they could not satisfy his spirit. On becoming a printer, his industry and dispatch afforded him some leisure, and he endeavored to find relief in virtuous recreations. He tried floriculture and angling, but they grew irksome. He betook himself to company, to cards, to drinking, to horse-racing. Cards he found an insipid waste of time; wine was madness; the race-course a scene of vicious dissipation. Speaking of the Doncaster races, he says: "As I passed through the company, dejected and disappointed, it occurred to my mind, what is all this immense multitude assembled here for? To see a few horses gallop two or three times round the course as if the devil were both in them and their riders! Certainly we are all mad, we are fit for Bedlam, if we imagine that the Almighty made us to seek happiness in such senseless amusements. I was ashamed and confounded, and determined never to be seen there any more."[20]

He became the manager of a weekly newspaper, which, he says, had a bad moral effect upon him. He read the infidel publications of the time, and sank into fatalism and deism, denying first the divinity of Christ, and then the Bible itself. He removed to London, hoping to find happiness in a more excited life, but could not. He thought of continental travel as a relief, but the political disturbances of Europe interfered. Profoundly wretched, he turned his attention to religion, but as yet in vain. "There was something," he says, "dull and disagreeable wherever I turned my eyes, and I knew not that the malady was in myself." He went to the theater, and to Whitefield's tabernacle, but could discern no difference between Whitefield's sermons and a good tragedy. "Being," he writes, "now weary of every thing, and every place being equal to me, (for I carried about with me a mind that was never at rest,) I embraced the invitation of my friends, and returned into the country. I was then in an agreeable situation. I wanted for nothing. I had more money than I knew what to do with, yet I was as wretched as I could live, without knowing either the cause of my misery, or any way to escape it."

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[20] Autobiography. Jackson's Early Methodist Preachers, vol. iii.

He again attempted to find rest of mind in rustic company and conviviality, but they failed him. "Sometimes," he says, "when among facetious company, I endeavored to catch their spirit; but in the midst of levity I had a dread upon me. Experience taught me that their laughter was madness. As soon as I returned to sober thoughts, I found that my feigned mirth left a melancholy upon my mind, and this was succeeded either by storms of passion or an aversion even to life."

He wandered to various places of religious worship, but finding their instructions unsatisfactory, he forsook them all, and on Sundays confined himself to his chamber, or retired to the shades of a neighboring wood, where he meditated on the arguments for and against deism, willing to credit the Christian revelation if he could; but "my reason," he writes, "leaned to the wrong side, and inclosed me in endless perplexities." He sometimes bowed before God and "supplicated for mercy and truth;" his "heart was melted," and he "felt something of the presence of God," but these gracious impressions were transient. He read the life of Eugene Aram, and resolved to imitate his example in acquiring knowledge, but to avoid his vices, imagining that as he had the desire, so he had the capacity to learn everything. But a brief meditation, he says, broke in pieces all his schemes. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with

God. What did this man's wisdom profit him? It did not save him from being a thief and a murderer; no, nor from attempting even his own life. True wisdom is foolishness with men. He that will be wise must first become a fool, that he may be wise. I was like a man awakened out of sleep. I was astonished. I felt myself wrong. I was conscious I had been pursuing a vain shadow, and that God only could direct me into the right path. I therefore applied to him with importunity, entreating him to show me the true way to happiness, which I was determined to follow, however difficult or dangerous."

The anxieties, the unrest of this man are legitimate to any thoughtful mind which has not settled the problem of life by a practical conformity to the teachings of Christianity; for if Christianity is true, he needed a higher life than he had yet attained; if Christianity is not true, then life is but a mockery of the profoundest instincts and capacities of our nature, a tragi-comedy, justifying even a deeper wretchedness than he experienced. He found at last the only genuine relief, and passed through a long, serene, and useful career, and a blessed death. The Methodists reached his native village, where his mother, whom he tenderly loved, still resided. She was converted by their instrumentality, and sent him a message, entreating him to hear the itinerants in his neighborhood. He visited a few members of their society, but left them, as well-meaning, ignorant people, and thought no more about them for some time. They invited him again; he went, and "disputed about religion for some hours, till he had fairly wearied them." As he was about to withdraw, "one of the company," he writes, "desired to ask me a few questions. The first was, 'Are you happy?' My countenance instantly fell, and I answered from the dictates of my conscience, 'No.' She then inquired if I was not desirous of finding happiness. I replied that it had been my pursuit ever since I could remember; that I was willing to obtain it on any terms, and that I had sought for it every way I could think of, but in vain. She then showed me the true way of obtaining the happiness I wanted, assuring me, if I sought the Lord with all my heart, I should certainly find in him that peace which the world could not bestow. Every word sunk deep into my mind, and from that moment I never lost my resolution to be truly devoted to God. I immediately broke off all connection with my companions, threw my useless books into the fire, and sought the Lord with all my might."

He entered upon his new life in a manner which was characteristic of his temperament. One of his greatest difficulties was that he did not experience any of those agonizing perturbations of mind, often affecting the body, which he saw in others. After much reflection he was, he says, "convinced of the necessity of receiving with thankfulness the smallest tokens of the divine favor, and saw that he must suffer, with childlike simplicity, the Lord to lead him in his own way!" He thus found rest for his soul. He also went on to "perfection," and became a witness of the Methodist interpretation of Paul's doctrine of Sanctification, and it is remarkable that in seeking this higher experience he had greater spiritual struggles than in his preceding religious attainments.

He began to exhort, and at last to preach, in a neighboring village, among a population which "differed but little from savage Indians." In 1763 he was received on trial by the Conference, and for nearly thirty years traveled laborious circuits in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He confronted mobs with his habitual equanimity, and endured bravely the hardships which were then inseparable from the life of a Methodist itinerant. In the Dales, a noted circuit of that day, he exerted himself much above his strength, both in preaching and traveling, often venturing in tempestuous weather over those dreary fells when even the mountaineers themselves retreated. He was frequently in danger of being swallowed up in the bogs, or carried away by the torrents. Sometimes he rode over valleys where the snow was eight or ten feet deep for two or three furlongs together. "When the danger was most imminent, I not only found," he writes, "a calm resignation, but a solid rejoicing in the God of my salvation."

In 1792 he was appointed the Magazine and Book editor of the Connection, an employment for which his early studies had well qualified him. He labored faithfully in this office till the infirmities of age compelled him to retire. "His end," writes Benson, "was peaceable and serene, as his life had been meek and temperate." "I feel Christ to be more precious to my soul than ever," he said a short time before his death, which occurred on the 22d of May, 1818, in the eightieth year of his age and the fifty-fifth of his ministry. He was "an old disciple and faithful laborer in the Lord's vineyard," say his brethren in their Minutes.

In the same year died "Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby Hall;" so he is styled in contemporary Methodist publications; but his highest honor is that his untitled name stands for many years on the roll of the Conference appointments. He has repeatedly received our attention as one of the historical men of Methodism, and especially as its founder in the Norman Islands, where it has had so interesting a history. A man of wealth, of an elegant home at Raithby Hall, (a home for his brethren as well as for himself,) of education, of fine poetic taste, and no little poetic talent; of profound piety, bordering on mysticism, but never falling into delusion; of a meek spirit, liberal with his wealth toward every great interest of Methodism, yet scrupulously diffident of any recognition of his charities; laborious in preaching, notwithstanding chronic illness; faithful to the denomination through its hardest struggles, before and after the death of Wesley, at whose grave he mourned the coming peril; and dying at last a veteran of the Connection, after most of his early fellow-laborers had departed, he well deserved the affectionate testimony of the Conference, that he was one of "those exalted saints," whose "graces would have been highly esteemed in the character of a Christian in the purest age of Christianity," and that the "close of his earthly career was in perfect unison with the undeviating tenor of his life—the setting of a refulgent sun in a calm, clear evening sky, with the certainty of rising again in everlasting splendor."[21]

He was born at Panton House, an estate of his family, in Lincolnshire, in 1752.[22] From his youth he was religiously inclined, and entered Cambridge University to prepare for the Established Church. Wesley first mentions him in 1776. "I went," he says, "to Horncastle and to Spilsby with Mr. Brackenbury. While this gentleman was at Cambridge he was convinced of sin, though not by any outward means, and soon after justified. Coming to Hull he met with one of our preachers. By long and close conversation with him he was clearly convinced it was his duty to join with the people called Methodists: at first indeed he staggered at lay preaching; but after weighing the matter more deeply, he began preaching himself, and found a very remarkable blessing both in his own soul and in his labors."[23]

They were thenceforward fast friends, congenial in literary tastes and religious habits. Brackenbury accompanied Wesley to Scotland and to Holland, and followed him to the tomb. Wesley frequented Raithby Hall, near which its opulent owner built a Methodist chapel.[24] As a magistrate, he kept the mob in check when it was disposed to assail the itinerant evangelists. Though his name long appears in the Minutes, he traveled irregularly as a "supernumerary." His knowledge of the French tongue fitted him to preach in the Channel Islands, and when Wesley received a letter, as we have seen, requesting preachers for them, Brackenbury, taking Kilham as his attendant, went thither, and introduced the new movement, through severe persecutions from the mob and the magistrates.[25]

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[21] Minutes of 1819.

[22] Raithby Hall; or, Memorial Sketches of Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., etc. By Mrs. Richard Smith, (daughter of Adam Clarke,) p. 4. London, 1859.

[23] Journal, July 9, 1776; Works, vol. iv, p. 458. Am. ed.

[24] Wesley describes the place with admiration: "We went," he says, "to Raithby, an earthly paradise; how gladly would I rest here a few days; but it is not my place. I am to be a wanderer upon earth: only let me find rest in a better world. At six o'clock I preached in the church to such a congregation as I never saw here before; but I should not wonder if all the country would flock in hither, to a palace in the midst of a paradise!"

During more than forty years did he "adorn and peacefully preach the Gospel," say the old Minutes. He made frequent excursions into various parts of the country to proclaim the truth. His pious spirit demanded seasons of religious retirement and repose: leaving his residence and the world, he would shut himself up in some solitary village for meditation and prayer. "The mission of his spirit ended, he would return to his home and duties." He came forth from these annual seclusions, or "retreats," refreshed for more energetic labors. His widow, a devoted and congenial woman, recorded, long after his death, an example of his usefulness on one of these occasions. "About the year 1793," she says, "my beloved husband resolved on one of his '*retreats*,' that is, on an entire seclusion of himself from all society, for the purposes of constant prayer and holy exercises. Being at Southampton, he took the first coach which drew up, and it set him down at Weymouth. He hired private lodgings, but the very next day he was met by Mr. Blunt, of Frome, who instantly said, 'O sir, you are the very person I wanted. The Isle of Portland,' pointing to it, 'is all darkness; you must go there.' He went, but the detail is too long; only I may add, that after a little time Poole was also visited. The play-house was hired for preaching, and my faithful husband commenced there, and an immense flocking to hear the word followed. Souls were converted, a chapel built, and it is now formed into a circuit with more than eight hundred members. In the Weymouth Circuit there are 455, and in the Dorchester Circuit, divided from Weymouth, 336. All this, the present fruit, has, humanly speaking, providentially resulted from my dear husband stepping into the coach at Southampton."

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[25] See vol. ii, b. v, ch. 11.

He built at Poole a Methodist chapel, on the walls of which the grateful people placed, after his death, a tablet commemorating his liberality and holy life. At Stamford he introduced Methodism in the midst of a most daring persecution, and spent several months in the tumult, obloquy, and hostility of all ranks of people, but he succeeded. One result was the conversion of a wealthy lady, who erected there a chapel and an adjacent residence, and, conveying them through him to the Conference, died in the faith before they were completed.

It is to be regretted that the records of this saintly man are so scanty. His modesty was almost morbid, and he forbade any notice of his abundant charities, or any record whatever of his life. The Conference expresses, in its Minutes, deep regret at the restriction thus imposed upon its grateful admiration, but its notice of him becomes the more eulogistic by the acknowledged restraint. His death, August 11, 1818, was marked with the conscious serenity of a mind at peace with God and in charity with all mankind.

He founded many churches, built chapels, gave thousands of pounds to the religious philanthropies of his day, within and without the limits of his own denomination, and, above all, served his generation by a rare example of holy living. His devotion, it is said, "like that of the seraphic Fletcher, symbolized equally with mystic contemplation and glowing zeal. His whole being, body, soul, and spirit, was one oblation to God."[26]

He was of middle size, and had a bland though serious aspect, expressive of much refinement, thoughtfulness, and benevolence. His manners were those of the English and

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[26] De Quetteville, his fellow-laborer in the Norman Isles, and his correspondent for thirty-six years, describes him as "living in the spirit of prayer, and as having a remarkable spiritual unction in his conversation as well as his preaching." "Je n'ai point trouvé son egal"—I have not found his equal, adds the venerable French missionary. Vie du Rev. Jean de Quetteville. Par Henri de Jersey, p. 161. Londres, 1847.

Christian gentleman, though tinctured somewhat with reserve. His humility was equalled only by his liberality; and though he was of a family which belongs to the annals of England, recorded by her historians and her poets, represented honorably in her Church, her politics, and science, and possessing large patrimonial estates in Lincolnshire and adjacent counties, he deemed his noblest alliance to be that which he held with John Wesley and his suffering but heroic itinerants, his noblest family honor that which he derived from the "household of faith."[27]

He had the blessed felicity of a sanctified as well as an opulent home. His wife surpassed him, if possible, in the Christian virtues. She was often his companion in his ministerial travels. She survived him nearly thirty years, and much of her time was spent in charitable visits to the scenes of his labors, and the Churches which he had founded, or the chapels he had erected. She built and supported nineteen schools on the family estates. Her benevolence continually poured into the treasuries of the missionary and other funds of the Connection. Raithby Hall was a home, during her long life, for the Wesleyan itinerants, and a sanctuary for its Methodist neighbors. Scores of their official members were sometimes seated together at its table, on quarterly meeting occasions, and its pious hostess always welcomed them as the "blessed of the Lord." At one of these seasons, when more than fifty were to surround her hospitable board, she wrote to a Christian correspondent: "It is most delightful to think that as each has his attendant angel or angels, I shall be cheered by entertaining them unawares; and many a time, I doubt not that Matt. x, 40–42 has been verified in my case, when I have had the privilege and honor of receiving those whom the world despises."

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[27] His family so far departed from his wish as to erect a mural monument to his memory, near the communion rails in Raithby Church. It was executed by Chantrey, and bears the following epitaph from the pen of Montgomery:

"Silent be human praise!
The solemn charge was thine,
And widowed love obeys,
And here upon thy shrine
Inscribes the monumental stone,
With glory be to God alone."

Excelling in all the moral charms of her sex, with an intellect which is said to have been of mature proportions, and richly endowed with the results of study and experience, her society was sought by the highest order of cultivated and devout men. Divines, philosophers, and Christian friends were her frequent guests. She died, in full assurance of eternal blessedness, June 12th, 1847, at the ripe age of seventy-six.

Samuel Bardsley also appears in the list of the dead for 1818. He had been for some time the oldest preacher of the Conference. It was not the least of his Christian honors that he was the "spiritual father" of Samuel Bradburn.[28] He began his ministerial travels in 1768, and continued them with much usefulness during half a century. He was a very holy man, universally beloved for his benevolent temper, and not a little admired for his genial manners, which continually refreshed his conversation without detracting from his piety. "On his heart," say his brethren in their Minutes, "was deeply engraven the law of kindness, and his evenness and sweetness of temper were proverbial. From divine love, which not only reigned in, but filled his soul, flowed his unfeigned love of the brethren and of the whole family of mankind." He is described as large and corpulent, and a child in simplicity and sweetness. At the close of the Leeds Conference of 1818 he and his old companion, Francis Wrigley, "a sturdy veteran, who had known him from his youth, each in turn the oldest preacher in the Connection," set out to travel together toward their circuits. "Arriving at a country inn, they took tea, and then sat in the door-way watching the departing light. Their conversation was heard by none but themselves; but an autumn evening—the full harvest gathered in by the tired laborer, and the welcome rest at hand—must have reminded them of their own course well-nigh spent, and of the repose so needed and so near. Bardsley felt ill, and proposed to retire for the night. His friend went with him toward his bedroom. Bardsley's strength failed, and he sat down on the topmost step; then threw his arm round Wrigley's neck, saying, 'My dear, I must die,' and 'was not, for God took him.'"[29]

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[28] See an anecdote connected with this fact, vol. ii, b. v, ch. 5. Bradburn clung to him with grateful fondness. "He was walking the streets of Sheffield with Bardsley on one occasion—both of them men of gigantic size—arm locked in arm, puffing, blowing, sighing, perspiring under the scorching rays of an August sun. A friend met them; they paused, and, as Bradburn wiped the thick drops from his brow, he exclaimed, 'Here we are, the two babes of the wood,' alluding to the childlike simplicity which distinguished the life and manners of his 'true yoke-fellow.'" Wakeley's Heroes of Methodism, p. 280.

In 1821 disappeared one of the greatest lights of Methodism, Joseph Benson. He has already been too often and too prominently before us to need here particular commemoration. No man in the Methodistic movement labored for it more devotedly. Its character, as a special mission of the Church, and as having an extraordinary destiny, impressed him habitually, and rendered him scrupulously hesitant of innovations in its system. He was sometimes pertinacious and severe in his opposition to changes; but his capacious mind saw and directed them when they became inevitable. As a preacher he combined a critical talent for exposition with an overwhelming eloquence of declamation. In person he was without pretensions; of but medium stature, thin with abstinence and labor, slightly stooping, and wearing to the last the plain straight-fronted black coat; his face indicated deep thought, and but few hairs were scattered on his forehead; his voice was feeble and harsh, his manner in the pulpit without grace. But his mighty thoughts arrested attention, and his appeals to the conscience were like the trumpets of Sinai waxing louder and louder.[30] In literary labors for the Church his devo tion has not been surpassed, nor perhaps equaled. As commentator, biographer, polemical pamphleteer, editor of the denominational Magazine and books for many years, he was more useful to it, if possible, than by his powerful ministry. All his literary productions were gratuitously given to the Conference. For more than half a century he labored night and day, economizing the very moments of his time for the public good. "Often," says Entwisle, "while I lived near him in City Road, did his diligence speak loudly to me. At night, so late as eleven o'clock, his light was unextinguished; and at five in the morning he was found in his study again. This was uniformly the case; and while I often observed it from my own room, I admired his conduct, and felt a desire to imitate him as far as practicable."

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[29] Life of Bunting, vol. i, p. 277.

[30] Life of Benson, by Treffry, ch. 10. Jackson's Life of Newton, ch. 3. Etheridge's Life of Clarke, ch. 9. Etheridge says: "We have been told that his sermons were sometimes attended not only by the common clergy, but by bishops of the Church. That great and good man, the

Laden with years, and worn out by labors which had never been relieved by sufficient relaxations, he died February 16, 1821, aged seventy-three years, and was laid to rest among the historic dead of City Road Chapel, within the communion rails of which the Conference has commemorated his services by a befitting monument.

As we continue to turn over the obituary pages of the Minutes of this period, we almost continually meet with the names of the primitive heroes of the itineracy. James Creighton, Theophilus Lessey, Sen., John Braithwaite, Jonathan Crowther, Sen., Miles Martindale, Walter Griffith, John Smith, Sen., Charles Graham, Francis Wrigley, John Hamilton, and a host of others, pass away in rapid succession, until the number of a hundred and fifty dead, for the decade, is completed; a very large proportion of them falling in the foreign missions. Some of them will claim our attention hereafter.

No man, who fell in the Methodist ranks in this period, was more profoundly mourned than Francis Asbury. Though not the first, he was the chief founder of Methodism in the

Rev. Richard Cecil, greatly delighted to hear him. He said that Mr. Benson seemed like a messenger sent from the other world to call men to account. 'Mr. Benson,' said Robert Hall, 'is irresistible, perfectly irresistible!'"

New World. The history of Christianity, since the apostolic age, affords not a more perfect example of ministerial and episcopal devotion than was presented in this great man's life. He preached almost daily for more than half a century. During most of this time he traveled, with hardly an intermission, the North American continent from north to south and east to west, directing the growing hosts of his denomination with the skill and authority of a great captain. He entered the itinerant ministry in England when but seventeen years of age; he went to America in his twenty-sixth year, was ordained bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church when thirty-nine years old, at its organization in 1784, when it comprised less than fifteen thousand members and but about eighty preachers, and he fell in 1816, in his seventy-first year, at the head of an army of more than two hundred and eleven thousand Methodists, and more than seven hundred itinerant preachers. It has been estimated that in the forty-five years of his American ministry he preached about sixteen thousand five hundred sermons, or at least one a day, and traveled about two hundred and seventy thousand miles, or six thousand a year; that he presided in no less than two hundred and twenty-four annual conferences, and ordained more than four thousand preachers. He was, in fine, one of those men of extraordinary, of anomalous greatness, in estimating whom the historian is compelled to use terms which would be irrelevant, as hyperbole, to most men with which he has to deal. His discrimination of character was marvelous; his administrative talents would have placed him, in civil government or in war, by the side of Richelieu or Cesar, and his success placed him unquestionably at the head of the leading characters of American ecclesiastical history. No one man has done more for Christianity in the western hemisphere. His attitude in the pulpit was solemn and dignified, if not graceful; his voice was sonorous and commanding, and his discourses were often attended with bursts of eloquence "which spoke a soul full of God, and, like a mountain torrent, swept all before it."[31] Notwithstanding his advanced age and shattered health he continued his travels to the last, till he had to be aided up the pulpit steps, and to sit while preaching. About six months before he died he wrote. "My eyes fail. I will resign the stations to Bishop M'Kendree. I will take away my feet. It is my fifty-fifth year of ministry, and forty-fifth of labor in America. My mind enjoys great peace and divine consolation. My health is better, which may be in part because of my being less deeply interested in the business of the conference. But whether health, life, or death, good is the will of the Lord. I will trust him; yea, I will praise him. He is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Glory! glory! glory!" On the 24th of March, 1816, when unable to either walk or stand, he preached his last sermon at Richmond, Va., and on the 31st died at Spottsylvania, Va. With Wesley, Whitefield, and Coke, he ranks as one of the four greatest representative men of the Methodistic movement. In American Methodism he ranks immeasurably above all his contemporaries and successors in historical importance, and his eventful life will afford us the chief materials for the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church during half a century.

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[31] Bangs's History of the M. E. Church, vol. ii, p. 398.

CHAPTER X.

EXTRAORDINARY LABORERS AND SUCCESSES, 1815–1825.

Moral Invigoration of the Church — Newton's Labors — Bunting — Clarke — He visits Ireland — His Opinion of Modern Methodism — He projects the Shetland Missions — Completes his Commentary — Watson's Services — Bramwell — His holy Life — His great Success — His Death — David Stoner begins his Ministry — His Usefulness — Entwisle — The "Village Blacksmith" and the "Yorkshire Farmer" — Jonathan Saville — Their Influence on the Missionary Development of Methodism — William Carvosso — Illustrations of his Usefulness — Great Revivals in Cornwall — John Smith's Conversion — His first Failures in Preaching — He changes the Style of his Discourses — His extraordinary Usefulness — Hodgson Casson — His Eccentricities — He turns a Dancing Party into a Prayer-meeting — His History and remarkable Usefulness — John Emory, Delegate from the American General Conference — Richard Reece and John Hannah, Delegates from the Wesleyan Conference.

Most of the present decade was a period of spiritual invigoration to the Church, as its statistics attest. Its ministerial leaders were laboriously occupied in its financial schemes, especially in its more thorough missionary organization; but their travels and preaching, in behalf of these interests, tended to its moral growth. They spread a sentiment of unity and co-operation among its societies, and diverted the attention of the people from local causes of disturbance; and as their preaching was eminently evangelical, on whatever occasion, the piety and zeal of the Connection was deepened throughout their routes.

Newton labored on the London, Wakefield, Liverpool, Manchester, and Salford circuits. He was retained the fullest time allowed, three years, at each, except London. From 1817 to the end of his life, no one of his contemporaries was confined to fewer circuits by the Conference acpointments, though no one preached more generally. He spent thirty-five years on five of them.[1] Twenty years of his ministerial life were given to Liverpool and Manchester: nominally at least, for all England now became his parish. His eloquent preaching attracted crowds at all points of his circuits; their chapels were improved or rebuilt; their funds were replenished; their religious character elevated; their members multiplied. Though usually at home on Sundays, his rapid traveling enabled him to reach distant parts of the country during the week-days, and the increasing missionary interest of the Church now demanded his labors in all directions. In 1822 he delivered his first sermon in Ireland. He had been appointed to attend its Conference, and this was the first of those often repeated visits, by which his name became a revered household word in most of its Methodist families. Twenty-three Irish Conferences, at least, were attended by him. His peculiar eloquence and devout spirit refreshed the wearied laborers of that sterile field, and renewed the courage of many a despondent evangelist. He preached daily in these journeys, and, wherever he went, left a blessing with the Churches.

Bunting was appointed to London during the whole of this period, excepting the last year, which he spent at Manchester. In one of these years he was President of the Conference, and during three of them he was editor of its Book Room. He too was now incessantly engaged in the great enterprises of the Connection. If not so extensive a traveler for them as Newton, yet was he virtually charged with their central management in London. The temporalities of the Church, its funds for chapels, for preachers and preachers' children, for missions and education; the affairs of its publishing house, the very form of its Annual Minutes, show more and more, every year, the impress of his masterly mind.

Adam Clarke's health had suffered during several years;

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[1] Jackson's Life of Newton, chap. 6.

at the beginning of the decade he wrote: "I must hide my head in the country, or it will shortly be hidden in the grave."[2] In 1815 he purchased a rural residence at Millbrook, near Liverpool. There he pursued his learned labors, but preached as his strength would allow, supplying appointments regularly at Manchester and Liverpool, and making excursions sometimes to distant parts of the country. He built a chapel on his own estate for his rustic neighbors, and his house was the home of the local preachers who supplied its pulpit. He received there also, at the instance of Sir Alexander Johnstone, two Buddhist priests, whom he educated in Christianity and the sciences of Europe. In 1816 he visited Scotland and Ireland; in the latter he made a pilgrimage to scenes memorable and affecting in his own history. "We spent," he says, "a few hours at Port Stewart, where I saw many of my old friends. At a little village near this place, called Burnside, I visited the old barn, where, for the first time, I heard a Methodist preacher; the house in which my father had for several years resided, and the field where, after earnestly wrestling with God for mercy, I found his peace, after having endured a great fight of affliction and sore distress of soul. These places are all interesting to me, and in making this record I am in some measure recording the mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord to myself. I visited the house of a family who had, in my childhood, showed me paternal affection; but all, except one member of the family, are dead, and the house itself is in comparative desolation. As I gazed, I remembered the words of the Persian poet, Khosroo: 'I walked by the church-yard, and wept to think how many of my friends were numbered with the dead. With a throbbing heart I asked, Where are they? And fate, in a mournful accent, re-echoed, Where are they?'"

He presided at the Irish Conference, which was now distracted by the sacramental controversy, and was destined to suffer still more severely from it by a schism. Many of the trustees and other leading laymen impeached the liberal policy of the English Conference as treachery to Wesley's "Plan," and were so tenaciously attached to the national Church as to resist, to their utmost, the demand of a large portion of the laity for the sacraments from the hands of their own pastors. Clarke, as an Irishman, could effectively oppose their impolitic course. He asserted the beneficial effect of the English concessions. "I have met," he said, "more classes in my circuit than any other man, and have seen no loss of spirituality. I will not make invidious comparisons between the Methodists in England and Ireland; in both they are the children of my God and Father; but this I will say, from perfect acquaintance with the subject, that they have in England more grace and more stability since the introduction of the sacrament than before. I know Methodism better than any man in Ireland, and can say that preaching in Church hours, and the sacraments from the hands of our own preachers, have been marked by the most distinguished approbation of God. The Methodists in England are a thousand times more attached to the Church of England and her service than they ever were before; and the method which we were before taking to drive them to the Church was driving them, and is now driving those of Ireland, into Dissenting congregations. Our usefulness to the Church is now greater than ever." To the preachers he said, on parting: "My advice to you all is, look up to God and keep close together; never think of measuring back your steps to trustee craft again. Give up the sacrament of the Lord's Supper only when you go to drink the new wine in the kingdom of God. Let neither fear nor flattery induce you to do it one moment sooner. Had you had it twenty years ago, you would have been doubly more numerous, and doubly more holy. God has broken your chain; if you mend it, or suffer others to do so, you will have his curse. If the genuine Methodists of Ireland stand fast in their fiery trial, God will make you both great and glorious. Look for your help from him. Do not suppose that any man's money is necessary to the support of Christ's cause; for 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.'"[3]

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[2] Life by his son, chaps. 7, 8.

At this session the Irish Conference adopted the policy of their English brethren, and voted for the administration of the sacraments, sixty-two for, and only twenty-four against it. In a "Letter of Pacification," they announced to the people the concession, and vindicated the right which they had so long held in suspense out of respect to the Establishment and to the no small detriment and dissatisfaction of many of their societies.[4]

Clarke's excursions to the metropolis and to other parts of the kingdom were frequent. He opened new chapels, attended missionary meetings, and gave new impulse to the Connection wherever he went. In 1822 he was elected the third time to the presidency of the Conference. In this official capacity he again visited Ireland, and presided at its Conference, inspiring it to bear up under the continued strife of the sacramental controversy. At Belfast he said: "One proposing the question to me, 'Is Methodism now what it has been?' I answered it in a way very different from what was, I believe, expected and intended by it: 'No; it is more rational, more stable, more consistent, more holy, more useful to the community, and a greater blessing to the world at large.' All this I found no difficulty in proving."

It was in his present presidency that he proposed the Shetland mission, at the instance of M'Allum. Two young preachers were sent to those borean regions. The mission became a favorite project with its founder; he threw all his natural and religious enthusiasm into it, corresponded with the missionaries, begged funds for them, gave to them liberally from his own income, and at last visited the islands himself, preaching among them with the ardor of an apostle. It was not long before they were pervaded with religious interest; many commodious chapels were erected, and thus a "mighty work was shortly accomplished, for the hand of the Most High dispensed a blessing, and his word ran very swiftly." Meantime his gigantic literary labors went on, and soon after the close of the decade appeared the concluding portion of his Commentary. He had spent nearly forty years in the task.

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[3] Etheridge's Clarke, III, 1.

[4] "Centenary of Methodism," by the Irish "Primitive Methodists," chap. 13. Dublin, 1859.

Richard Watson began this period on the Hull circuit. His ministry in that city was very successful; "indeed, at no time of his life," it has been remarked, "does his preaching appear to greater advantage than when regarded in connection with its fruits in Hull."[5] He promoted the erection there of a large and elegant chapel, and was instrumental in bringing into the Methodist communion many important families. His sermons at this time are described as being marked by a force of reasoning and persuasiveness almost peculiar to himself, embodying the most vital truths of the Gospel, and delivered with an earnestness and pathos which produced profound effect, "reclaiming many a wanderer from God, conveying strength and consolation to many a broken heart, and stimulating believers to go on to perfection."[6]

His visit to the metropolis in 1816, and his remarkable missionary sermon at City Road, heretofore noticed, led to his appointment to London by the Conference of that year, and he also was now to become one of the directing minds of the great schemes of Methodism, for his appointment included the secretaryship of the Missionary Society, and placed him in close relations with all the metropolitan guides of the Connection. He preached, however, as usual, not only at the Sunday, but at the weeknight appointments of his circuit. All his powers, mental and bodily, says one of his colleagues, were consecrated to the service of God. During the whole remainder of this period his appointments were to London, but he made frequent ex-

[5] Smith, II, 5, 6.

[6] Jackson's Watson, chap. 8.

cursions to various parts of the country to dedicate chapels, or to attend missionary anniversaries; and, as with Bunting and Newton, his great talents were thus brought to act on the denomination generally. Meanwhile he accomplished for it many of those important literary services which are his chief distinction in its ministry. His "Defense of the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies," against the attacks of certain politicians, appeared soon after his removal to London. His pamphlet on "The Eternal Sonship of Christ" was issued in 1818, to counteract the opinions of Adam Clarke on that subject; it determined Watson's rank at once as a profound theologian, and had so much influence that the Conference resolved to admit no candidate to its membership who denied "the divine and eternal Sonship of Christ." In 1820 appeared his "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley;" in 1821 he began to write his chief work, the "Theological Institutes," and by the autumn of 1825 the third part of that able production had appeared from the press. During these years the elaborate reports of the Missionary Society, and many of the Pastoral Addresses and other documents of the Conference, proceeded from his tireless pen. It may well be doubted whether any man did greater services for Methodism during these times than Richard Watson.

Humbler men were, meanwhile, pursuing with success its more spiritual labors. To these we must look as indispensable exponents of the internal life of the denomination, its most characteristic men; for though its great leaders were true to its spirit and mission, and their new spheres of action were legitimate developments of its system, its great work was among the masses of the population, and its most directly active, if not its most important workmen were those who, immediately among the common people, preached from chapel to chapel and from house to house the personal lessons of the Gospel.

William Bramwell was, unquestionably, one of the principal men of this class, the pre-eminent evangelist of his day. He was stationed on the Newcastle circuit in 1815. It was a time of great financial distress throughout the country; but he always had spiritual prosperity. He was approaching his end, and lived as in the precincts of the spiritual world. In October he wrote: "I am, I do assure you, waiting every day for my change; and I see the heavenly throng waiting for me. I long more than ever to be there, 'where we shall see his face, and never, never sin.' The Lord poured out his blessing in our first love-feast. Six or seven entered into liberty. I receive this from my heavenly Father as a token for good. In our second love-feast none but the society were admitted. It was quite crowded, although held a few miles from Newcastle. At the beginning all were quiet, and in considerable suspense for about an hour. But in an agony of prayer suddenly the power of God came upon us all. Conviction was general; there were cries for mercy in every direction. I never was able to preserve greater order, and not fewer than thirty persons were set at liberty. This work continued about two hours, and I never witnessed greater glory. I have seen a number saved the last week in different places, and I hope the work will go on, for, I do assure you, we need it at Newcastle and in the circuit."[7] Still later he says: "We have seen a blessed work of God, but seem rather at a stand again. Yet it may break out with greater power, and I hope it will. Numbers have been saved. The glory which has been revealed in different parts of this kingdom should make us all rejoice. The Lord 'ride on, till all be subdued!'" The secret of his power was his own intimate communion with God. About this time he writes: "I have received what I call an extraordinary baptism of the Spirit. My soul has experienced such a fellowship with God and heavenly things as I never felt before. O the glory which shall be revealed! I am swallowed up in him!" Again he says: "He justifies, he purifies, he then stays the mind on himself; but he gathers us nearer, and still nearer, till we feel we live in the presence of God every moment. This is our place, and this is heaven upon earth. Whether poor or rich, in company or without it, with our near relations or in their absence, the Lord is every thing to us, and every place is full of himself. We want no other heaven; we have all, and our God is this all." And again: "I long much to feel what it will be when separated from this vile body. I never had more pleasant walks, by faith, in the heavenly country. I see the company, and I live among them; for 'we are come to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect.' The manner is inexpressible, but the thing is certain." With such a spirit, his ministrations during these distressing times could not fail to touch the hearts of the suffering people. "All around us," he wrote in the spring of the next year, "are in tribulation. God only knows when the general conflict will be passed. God is in many places pouring out his flood of mercy even in these troublous times. England has surely had a great day of heavenly visitation. It has been exalted to heaven."

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[7] Life by Sigston, p. 285.

In 1817 he was sent to Salford circuit, where he had similar success. One of his hearers thus describes his ministry at this period: "How powerful was his call! 'Preachers! leaders! prayer leaders, and people!' and sometimes his zeal was so great that not an office of any kind escaped his notice. 'Singers and door-keepers!' resounded through the chapel. So impressive were his calls to enter into the fullness of every Gospel privilege, that every head has often been bowed down, and hundreds pricked to the heart. According to his own account, he seldom ascended the pulpit without strong conflicts. Perhaps his soul had been wrestling with God in mighty prayer, that the glory of the Redeemer might appear. But the nature of those conflicts he never mentioned. When, however, he had entered upon his duty, and sometimes even as soon as he entered the pulpit his soul became unburdened; in the midst of his sermon he would obtain full liberty. Enraptured with the glories of heaven, and filled with holy fervor and zeal, he would lose sight of his presence in the body. At such seasons the Spirit's influences were shed abroad; and if there was a heart that felt not, surely that heart was hardened by willful prejudice, or had become a willing captive to a Laodicean spirit. The inhabitants of Manchester, Salford, and Pendleton remember many of those seasons with a mixture of the most exalted feelings. Those of Barton will never forget the last love-feast which he held among them, when upward of thirty souls were set at liberty. On that occasion he informed me that for nearly two hours he did not know whether he was in the body or not. The fervor of his spirit often led him into an involuntary poetic strain, little inferior to those celebrated compositions which have given immortal honor to the name of Dr. Young. I did indeed think that he had composed some piece which described the warfare and triumph of a Christian, and that at these times he was quoting himself. This mode of delivery was of frequent occurrence. He usually met the society after preaching on a Sunday evening, when that holy fervor which he had felt during preaching was far from being evaporated. He appeared unwilling to leave his post: 'Suffer me, suffer me,' he would often repeat. During preaching, also, he used the same expressions, as well as 'Bear with me, O bear with me!' so importunate was he, and yet so feeling; and as often he returned to the charge. At the closing benediction he frequently resumed singing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow!' when the chapel, instead of being emptied, has been filled with fresh incense." We are not surprised, then, to read that sometimes in a single love-feast a score of souls were renewed; that at a single band or prayer-meeting, "as many as seven or eight were saved." About two months before he died he wrote: "To dwell in God is our place while on earth; and this is perpetuated by acts of faith. Faith realizes the glory; for, though we cannot see, yet we see all things in believing, make all that he is our own, and feel all the happy effects on the mind. Thus faith changes us more and more; we are taken up in the fullest union—'hid with Christ in God,' ready, and always waiting to leave this body, 'that we may be clothed upon with our house in heaven.' Glorious company! Glorious place! I long, I wait for his coming. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen. We live in Manchester, in which place we have about six hundred members belonging to Salford circuit. I have seen numbers saved since I came. Many have received full salvation, and live in clear liberty."

He attended the Conference of 1818 at Leeds. During the session it was observed that in his close walk with God he seemed hardly any longer of this world. He had a presentiment that he was about to enter in the "Church triumphant." In a sermon, near Leeds, he "spoke in a powerful manner on the 'boldness' with which a believer is inspired through Christ 'in the day of judgment;' and in the course of his second prayer he uttered this remarkable expression: 'Lord, didst thou not this day speak to my heart, and say, Thou shalt soon be with me to behold my glory?'" His last discourse was on the text, Isaiah xliii, 1–3: 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Great unction and power, it is said, attended his word; he prayed with uncommon fervor at the conclusion of the sermon, and in this manner terminated, at Holbeck, the last of his public labors.

He left the Conference a few hours before its adjournment, to prepare for his departure to his appointment.

After some religious conversation with his host he retired to rest, expecting to be called at two o'clock in the night, that he might begin his journey before dawn. He was afterward heard praying in his chamber: "O Lord, prepare me for thy kingdom, and take me to thyself." About two o'clock he was again heard saying: "Lord, bless my soul, and make me ready." The "chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," were already descending for him. He went down soon after two o'clock and took some refreshments. During this early repast he very often lifted up his hands and his eyes, and with great earnestness said, "Praise the Lord! Glory be to God!" He then said to the servant, "We will pray a little." They knelt down, and he prayed very fervently for himself, for her, and for the whole family, beseeching God that they, as well as himself, might be made ready for heaven. "The Lord bless you," he said to the servant, and departed into the shadows of the night. In a short time he was brought back dead. Two of the Leed's watch had seen him standing in the street, as if suddenly taken ill. They ran to help him; he fell upon his knees, and his soul was translated. He died in his sixtieth year, and in the thirty-third of his ministry. Few preachers, says his biographer, ever attracted larger or more attentive audiences. It is doubtful whether any other Methodist preacher of his day was directly instrumental of the conversion of more souls.[8]

Many of the members of the Conference were still in Leeds when the report of his death was made. They followed him to the grave, presenting an affecting spectacle of venerable men, who had long been his fellow-laborers and fellow-sufferers, succeeded by their younger brethren, and solemnly bearing to his resting-place one of their noblest heroes. His old friend, William Dawson, the "Yorkshire Farmer," preached an eloquent funeral sermon to about ten thousand persons, in the open air, near the spot where the veteran fell.

"Lord what is it that hinders? I think if Mr. Bramwell were somewhere within fifty miles I would go to him that he might teach me and pray for me. But how foolish is this! Christ is here! with me, and in me! Why then do I not enter into the promised land? Lord, I beseech thee remove the hinderance out of the way!" So wrote a young man, two years after Bramwell's death, while preaching, and struggling for entire purity of heart, on Bradford circuit; he was to be a second Bramwell during a brief ministerial career. Two weeks later he writes: "Glory be to God! My soul is happy in his love. I feel that Christ has my heart. Whether this be sanctification or not, I have not the clear assurance: but my soul is full of love and joy." He obtained the "clear assurance," and the name of David Stoner has ever since been precious throughout the Methodist world. The history of his Christian life has stimulated his ministerial brethren at home, has kindled the ardor of the itinerants in the frontier wilds of America, and nerved the missionaries of Fiji and New Zealand to wrestle with the principalities and powers of darkness amid the horrors of cannibal barbarism.[9]

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[8] See vol. ii, b. 5, chap. 10.

He was born at Barwick-in-Elmet, near Leeds, in 1794, of Methodist parents, who trained him early to a religious life. He was converted when about twelve years old. By diligence in study he qualified himself for the office of a teacher, which he creditably sustained during some years. As his youth advanced his sensitive mind was troubled with the impression that it was his duty to preach the Gospel. About his eighteenth year, rising from a dangerous illness, he yielded to his conscience, and began to labor in the local ministry. In 1814 he was sent out to aid the traveling preachers on the Leeds circuit, and the Conference of that year received him on probation, appointing him to Holmfirth, near Huddersfield. Entirely devoted to his work, and seeking the perfect consecration of his soul to God, he could not fail of immediate usefulness. The reckless were

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Memoir of David Stoner, by William Dawson and Dr. John Hannah. New York, 1853.

smitten under his word, and the Church was kept alive with zeal. From the beginning to the end of his ministerial course he was an evangelist in the fullest sense of the title, and "revivals" could hardly be called extraordinary, but rather ordinary results of his labors. Holiness, sanctification, was his theme, and from the time at which we have introduced him, when it became a distinct subject of his experience, he went through his course as "a flame of fire." Even before this period his usefulness was remarkable. His second circuit was Huddersfield, where he began his labors in 1816; during three years that he spent there four hundred and ten members were added to the Church, and the largest Methodist chapel in the world, except one at Leeds, was erected in the town of Huddersfield, the former scene of the faithful ministry of Venn, the Calvinistic Methodist and friend of Wesley. In 1819 he was removed to the Bradford circuit, where also he had great success, reporting when he left it an increase of more than one thousand communicants. Accompanied by one of his itinerant colleagues, and by three or four zealous leaders and local preachers, he held watch-nights in nearly every country appointment on the circuit. His word, writes his colleague, was indeed with power, producing an immediate and visible effect. He traveled on two other circuits during the remainder of our present period, Bristol and York, and with his usual success. His labors were excessive, for the York circuit included two or three of the present adjacent circuits. He preached in nearly fifty villages within a range of ten miles around York. At the conclusion of almost every evening service he held a prayer-meeting; it was often a scene of thrilling interest, but hardly ever of clamor or confusion, for he disliked noise "for its own sake," and never tolerated it, never allowing stamping or violent gesticulations, which, "if they do not come of evil, do not tend to good." He endeavored to promote recollectedness in penitently awakened minds, that they might present themselves rightly before God in prayer, and distinctly apprehend his gracious promises. A brother itinerant testifies respecting his labors on York circuit, that "a multitude, both of men and women, believed; a great proportion of whom continue to hold fast their confidence. At least four hundred persons were added unto the Lord; and though not exclusively by his instrumentality, yet he was an eminent instrument in the good which was done."

In 1825 it was deemed necessary to divide the circuit, and the "work deepened remarkably." Such was the intense earnestness of Stoner's spirit that his appeals were almost irresistible. The value of a single soul was to him worth the labor of a lifetime. "Praise the Lord for one," he exclaims, "but I want thousands. It is my daily prayer, Lord, lay on my heart the burden of souls. Let me feel for souls. Give me souls."

The good Joseph Entwisle shared the labors of Stoner on Bradford circuit. "The work of God still goes on," he writes in the beginning of 1821, "in this circuit; more and more are heard to inquire 'What must I do to be saved?' More and more are enabled to rejoice in God our Saviour The dry bones are moving through the whole circuit, and in every place the savor of the knowledge of Christ is spread abroad. To him be glory."

Wherever he passes on his circuit, he reports triumphs of the Church: at Bradford "the Lord is making bare his arm;" at Forsley "the Lord is also reviving his work;" at Mornington, "in this place also the Lord is carrying on his work;" at Low Moor, "surely the Lord is doing wonders at this place;" at White Abbey, "here, too, sinners are awakened and turned unto the Lord;" at Horton, "God is at work here." At almost every appointment he sees the demonstrative effects of Stoner's fervent ministry. "Since I began to travel," he writes, "I have not known one man under whose preaching so many souls have been awakened as under Mr. Stoner's;" a significant testimony from a veteran who had been a colleague of Bramwell, and had known most of the ministerial giants of Wesley's last years.

He gives himself continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word; he minds nothing else, and his profiting appears unto all."[10] When Entwisle left the circuit in 1823 he could look back upon "extraordinary successes." More than a thousand persons had been converted, and the piety of the Church had been everywhere deepened. It had been "a time of refreshing from the Lord, which could not soon be forgotten."

During these times Samuel Hick, the Village Blacksmith, labored in Yorkshire and neighboring counties, an apostle of the people. He had now become the popular orator of their missionary meetings; he was an assiduous visitor of the sick; he made preaching excursions in all directions; he emptied his pockets with a sort of hilarious delight for the poor, and denied himself severely in order to help them. His genial, happy spirit of piety, and his incessant travels and preaching kept Yorkshire astir with interest, and we cannot wonder that Methodism took, during these years, such tenacious hold on that shire, and has ever since had there its most fruitful harvests. Its great men, Clarke, Watson, Bunting, Newton, found their best receptions in this county, religious ovations; but the paramount heroes of Yorkshire Methodism among the masses were now Samuel Hick and William Dawson, and these men, by their self-denying charities, as well as by their singular eloquence, taught the Yorkshire Methodists those lessons of liberality to the Church, which have made the county preeminent for contributions to the missionary cause. New chapels were rising in all directions, and old ones were renewed. The Village Blacksmith and the Yorkshire Farmer were the favorite men to "open" them. Thousands of the people flocked to hear them on these occasions, and bore away instructions not only suited to their humble capacity, but powerful on their lives. These extraordinary men were also effective agents in securing funds for the erection of chapels; they had an influence on the liberality of the people which was peculiarly their own. At about the end of our present period, Hick gave up his business entirely and went about doing good as a volunteer home missionary. As an evangelist he was now hardly excelled in labors and usefulness by any of the regular itinerant preachers. He made excursions to several circuits in Yorkshire and Lancashire, preaching in towns and villages, bearing the word of God, so attractively exemplified in his own happy spirit, into the cottages of peasants and the homes of artisans, giving animation to their prayer-meetings, turning love-feasts into spiritual jubilees, gathering congregations of thousands on the Sabbaths, opening new and collecting for embarrassed chapels, and thus building up Methodism in a manner that few other men of his day could equal.

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[10] Mem. of Entwisle, chap. 15.

Dawson was indefatigable during these times. From 1821 to 1824 he made frequent journeys to the metropolis, to Bristol, and the principal towns of Cornwall, to the southern, western, and northern counties. The people on his routes were moved almost in mass to attend his ministrations on these occasions, and if his eccentric originality was their chief attraction, yet they left the crowded chapels with impressions of the truth which could never be forgotten. He was especially active in opening new chapels and at missionary anniversaries. His services on these occasions secured many thousands of pounds, but their moral advantages were still greater, for there was an unction in his preaching which always left a fragrance after his departure. His biographer remarks, that though he took the torch away with him, a number of lamps were left burning which had been kindled at his flame, and he found them more bright on his return. This was the case at Grimsby and other places, where a genuine revival of religion broke out, in the benefits of which many whole societies shared. The moving of the waters did not subside, says this writer, on his departure, as in the departure of the angel from the pool of Bethesda, and remain a dead calm till his return. The people were left with a relish for the ministry of others, as well as his own. They did not take their ideas of a minister from himself barely, cherishing the notion that they could receive good from no other; all others sinking in their esteem in proportion as he himself advanced. He drew them to God, not to himself.

This was also the period of chief usefulness in the life of Jonathan Saville. His popularity was at its height, and he used it only for the honor of his divine Master. His biographer says that the chief reason of his popularity was his zeal and usefulness. He was never idle, but was always "plotting where, and when, and how his Master's business should be done." We have seen how he labored as a prayer-leader, and how successful he was as a class-leader. In preaching he was also honored with great usefulness, especially during the period between 1816 and 1826. Frequently several persons were awakened under an afternoon sermon. He had great power in prayer, and was eminently a pleader with God; but he *looked for success* in preaching the word. He honored God by depending on his promise, and God honored him by the demonstration and power of his Spirit.

With Hick and Dawson he did important services during these years, in promoting the missionary zeal of the Church. The arguments of the eminent Methodist leaders for that cause showed that it was now, and perhaps was permanently to be the legitimate and characteristic development of Methodism; but the labors of these humbler men were necessary to bring the sublime conception directly home to the hearts of the people. They effectually did so, and the poor Methodist masses, kindling with the thought of the evangelization of the whole world, soon began to place their fiscal provisions for it in advance of those of most of the wealthiest religious denominations of the realm. So deeply were they imbued with zeal for missions, that their interest for them has never abated: it rapidly grew into a denominational habit; and to the labors of these years and these men can be traced the plans which are to-day extending the Gospel, by Methodist preachers, to nearly all the ends of the earth. It was at the beginning of this decade that these plans first took an organic form; at its close they were inextricably inwoven in the very warp and woof of the Methodist system. Coke's last report, on his departure to the East, showed the aggregate receipts, for both home and foreign missions, be less than £8,000;[11] at the close of the present period they amounted to more than £45,766, an astonishing increase for the times, and a pledge of that augmented liberality by which, in our day, they amount, for foreign missions alone, to more than £140,000.

But while this great cause was mightily aided by these humble laborers, their chief honor was their usefulness to their own class, the peasants, colliers, and artisans of England. Saville, especially, did the usual work of several pastors. He visited the sick and the poor, led three or four classes, conducted prayer-meetings as the chief of a band of prayer leaders, and preached continually. He became "conspicuous in the Church of God," says a high Wesleyan authority; "he made a figure among the Methodists in Yorkshire twenty or thirty years ago; and his Christian cheerfulness, his wit, his natural oratory, combined with his diminutiveness of stature, his zeal, and, above all, the assured tokens of his Master's presence, in the pulpit, on the platform, and in the social circle, gained him a sound, lasting, and useful popularity. . . . Could philosophy," adds this writer, who knew him many years, "have claimed the honor of having brought Jonathan Saville out of the mine, of giving him an intellectual polish, and of casting upon him the light which he so vividly reflected upon others, she would indeed have vaunted herself. But he could truly and humbly say, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great. And they glorified God in me.' Who can estimate the value of those labors which such a man has bestowed upon the world, while for so many years pursuing the even tenor of his way? Without such influences and labors, the blessed results of religion, all other efforts in the way of education, philanthropy, or legislation would be vain and abortive. Jonathan Saville (and he was the representative of a host of honored laborers in the vineyard of the Lord) dealt with men's consciences; his business was with the heart; he wielded the only instrument which could influence the whole man and the whole life; and by preaching the doctrines of a new birth, and salvation from sin to holiness, he became the means of a greater change than law can effect, and of greater good than the mere philanthropist ever aims at."[12]

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[11] The "Annual Report of the State of the Missions, etc. Conference Office, 1813."

While these men "of the people" were abroad in Yorkshire and contiguous counties, traveling and preaching like apostles, William Carvosso, though not a preacher, was hardly less an evangelist in Cornwall. Like Hick, he had been able, by his industry and frugality, to provide a modest competence for the remainder of his life; and it was about the beginning of this decade that he retired from the world, as he says, which means, however, that he went out more entirely than ever into the world to labor for its salvation, for he now devoted his whole time to religious travels and labors. He was a missionary from house to house, and from village to village. It is impossible to read his simple narrative of these useful toils without emotion. They are imbued with the purest piety and the tenderest human feeling. He had none of the ebullient vivacity which attracted the popular interest to Dawson and Hick, but a stronger charm—a simplicity, a sweetness and pathos, a divine unction which touched and melted all hearts. He was a lay St. John, walking among men in old age, with counsels of meekness and love ever upon his lips. It would be impossible to give, with much detail, examples of the singular usefulness of his long life; individually they would appear too minute and too local for historical notice; but aggregately they were historically important to the denomination in much of Western England; and, as an exemplification of the Methodistic spirit of the times, and a lesson of Christian life for all times, they deserve attention.

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[12] Rev. Francis A. West, Ex-President of the Wesleyan Conference. Memoir of Saville, pp. 87, 88.

A few minutes of his conversation often effected what years of preaching had failed to do. Entire families were led, one member after another, into the way to heaven by his visits. He meets on the highway a sick man, to whom death and eternity are strange topics, for "he is asleep in his sins." The word of exhortation is given. The invalid goes home with an awakened conscience, falls upon his knees in his chamber, lives some time a "striking witness of the power of divine grace," and dies "happy in God." A word of warning to another negligent sinner alarms him; he receives the grace of God, and becomes a useful class-leader. Many such lay laborers does Carvosso raise up among the societies of Cornwall. On a journey he pauses to pay toll at a gate; something in the appearance of the maiden who receives the money touches his simple and fatherly heart. "The moment I saw her," he says, in language which none but a Christian can comprehend, "I felt such a love for her soul, and such a concern for her salvation, that I thought I could have died for her." After he has passed he checks his horse, to give her his usual word of exhortation, but she has retired. On his return journey he meets her at the gate, and speaks the designed word. "I immediately alighted," he says, "went into the house, and found the Lord had touched her heart, for she was bitterly weeping. At the sight of this I soon wept also. Her father was present, a pious man and a class-leader, but unknown to me. He requested me to pray with her. The Lord poured his Spirit upon us, and my soul seemed overwhelmed with the divine presence." Another sister is also awakened before he departs. Four months pass, when he again pauses at the gate. The first of the sisters comes to him exclaiming, "You were sent here to save my soul!" "It is the Lord that did it," replies the good man, "and you must give the glory to him." The second daughter "ran out, with heaven sparkling in her eyes," and uttering aloud the praises of the Most High. Come in! come in!" was their language. Their pious father welcomes him as the blessed of the Lord, who had brought salvation to his children. In a year and a half the first of these converts "died in sure and certain hope of eternal glory." "You must now go and fill up her place in the Church," said Carvosso to her oldest brother. A younger brother being present "burst into tears, and from that time gave his heart to God." In three years he also dies in the faith. A year later the old evangelist finds the eldest son still unconverted, and again converses with him. "The silent tears soon began to flow," he writes, "and before we parted he promised that he would give himself to the Lord and go with his father to the class-meeting. Nine years he walked in wisdom's ways, and then finished his course with joy." Thus were the whole family gathered either into the Church or into heaven. Such was the manner in which this saintly man began his "retirement" from the world at the commencement of our present period, and during about twenty years did he thus go up and down Cornwall, an apostle in the houses of the people. He would sometimes be absent several weeks, leading classes and visiting from house to house. In the beginning of 1818, when nearly seventy years of age, he writes: "I have been on a tour of ten weeks among the Churches. The first two weeks I spent at Camborne. I met all their classes. I visited Wall, and was much blessed among the friends there. After spending a few days with my warm friends at Breage, I proceeded to Mousehole, where I rejoiced to see the mighty work of God displayed in convincing and converting sinners. I intended to stay only one week, but the work of the Lord broke out among them, and my friends would not let me go. In my usual way I went preaching from house to house, and I believe God never blessed my feeble efforts more than at this time. In one house I found a poor penitent, to whose broken heart the Lord revealed his pardoning mercy. We fell on our knees to give glory to God for what he had done. And now a brother of her who was the subject of the happy change, being present, fell on the floor, and cried aloud for mercy in an astonishing manner, and before I left the house the Lord also set his soul at liberty. In another house, while relating this circumstance, the arrow of truth reached the heart of a poor backslider, and she trembled as in the presence of God. The next morning I found her weeping for her ingratitude, and now made willing to return to her offended God. There was a gracious work among the children in the Sunday-school. None but those who have witnessed such a revival can form any idea of it."

This same year he commemorates the forty-seventh anniversary of his regeneration. "Glory be to His name," he says, "the last year has been the best of the whole. I may now say with Bunyan, 'I have got into that land where the sun shines night and day.' I thank thee, O my God, for this heaven, this element of love and joy in which my soul now lives. But I am not yet landed on the eternal shore; still I live in an enemy's country. But thou, O Lord, who hast kept me hitherto, wilt keep me unto the end." It was this happy, confiding spirit of piety that rendered his words so apt and quickening, especially to awakened consciences. "Faith" was his great theme. After returning from one of his customary tours, which had kept him six weeks absent from his classes, he says: "I was glad to meet so many of my old friends and companions still fighting the good fight of faith. With several of them I have now been united in Christian fellowship more than forty-seven years. God was pleased again to bless my conversation to some of the feeble of the flock, and I discovered more clearly than ever the mistake of many who are sincere. They say, 'I wish I was as happy as I was once,' without having the least conception of the excellency of faith as the instrument and condition of their salvation.

God has made known the Gospel plan in these words: 'By grace are ye saved, through faith.' We are saved by simple faith, or by believing in Jesus from moment to moment. It is 'to him that believeth' (not *has* believed nor *shall* believe) that righteousness is imputed. This is true, whether of pardon or purity, for both are received and retained only by faith in the blood of Christ." Such was the Methodistic doctrine of the Gospel which he taught continually, and which he lived even better than he could teach it. There is a tone of real, though simple sublimity often in his utterances on this subject. "This morning," he writes, "the Lord shined into my heart by his Holy Spirit, and gave me to see what is implied in the believer's being 'an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.' Such was my faith I could easily claim all that God hath in earth and heaven as my own. I clearly discover it is by these believing views that the soul is changed from glory into glory. It is by faith that we are enabled to see the true nature and emptiness of all the things of this world, and that we see they were never intended for our rest or portion. By faith we see that at last a smiling or frowning world amounts to nothing; we see the soul's wants, and miseries, and cure; we see Christ and heaven near; we triumph over all our foes, and lay hold on eternal life."

So distinct and direct were his views of this fundamental doctrine of Christianity, that perplexed and despondent minds, sometimes after groping for months or years in unbelief, suddenly saw it as in clear light while he was speaking of it, and, weeping or adoring God aloud, sprung, as it were, into the joy of a new life. His pages are continually interspersed with such instances.

As our present period drew toward its close his labors became more extensive and more useful, notwithstanding his advanced age. About the beginning of 1823 great revivals prevailed in many parts of the county. "I visited," he says, "Breage, Mullion, and Constantine, and rejoiced to find so many of those who had but recently entered on the work of God faithful in the path of duty. When I was at Constantine a gracious revival commenced, and I had the happiness of seeing many sinners awakened and brought to the knowledge of the truth. Hearing that God had very wonderfully visited Ponsanooth, I hastened thither, and found some of the distressed souls in the chapel, who had been there several days and nights struggling in prayer. At a factory the spirit of conviction was operating so powerfully that many who had been triflers were falling down on their knees to pray in the midst of their work. Indeed, for many days little else was done but attending to those who were interceding with God for their soul's salvation. Multitudes were the subjects of a gracious change; the exact number I cannot say, but upward of a hundred gave their names to meet in class. Not only at Ponsanooth has this glorious work broken out; it has gone forth into all the societies and congregations round about to a great extent. Thousands of sinners are said to be awakened."

About the same time a new religious interest spread over the Helston circuit, and continued some two or three years. More than four hundred persons were added to the societies in about two years. "Some indescribably affecting scenes," wrote a preacher, "have occurred during this revival of religion; parents with open arms embracing their once disobedient children, who were turned to the wisdom of the just; some whole and large families brought into the household of faith, and rejoicing together in hope of the glory of God; others, hoary-headed sinners, deeply and powerfully convinced of sin, and obtaining mercy in the mines where they pursued their daily occupation; and persons at the plow, so blessed during their labor with a sense of the pardoning love of God that the lanes and fields resounded with the praises of the Lord. This has not been the work of a week or a month, but has proceeded gradually through the last two years."[13]

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[13] Methodist Magazine, 1824, p. 126.

On Redruth circuit similar scenes occurred. More than a thousand persons applied for admission to the societies on trial at the beginning of 1824. "Not only in the chapels, which were exceedingly crowded, but also in their own houses, and even in the mines, several were brought to seek the mercy of God through Jesus Christ." "Sinners of all ages, from ten to seventy years, were asking 'What shall we do to be saved!'"[14] The awakening extended to Truro circuit; not less than fifteen hundred persons applied for admission into the society. Many vicious characters, it is stated, were reformed, many backsliders reclaimed, and many Christians stirred up to devote themselves more than ever to the service of God.

One of the most useful preachers of Methodism during these times was John Smith. He was born at Cudworth. Yorkshire, in 1794. His father was a local preacher, and his early education was strictly religious; but he broke away from its restraints, and for some years occasioned his family the deepest anxiety. His sports were boisterous and wicked: he was addicted to mimicry, and he frequented the Methodist prayer-meetings for the purpose of finding means of entertainment for his jovial companions. When fourteen years old he was placed with a grocer at Sheffield, where his life was so irregular that, after a trial of two years, his employer sent him back to his parents. They found him a situation at Barnsley, where he sank still lower. He abandoned entirely the public services of religion, became profane and a gambler, and put himself under training as a pugilist. He was, in short, "an adept, an enthusiast in vice."[15] Of a vivacious and energetic temperament, he was an apt leader of his dissipated associates; but he could not escape the impressions which his infant mind had received from the lessons of his home, where the prayers and tears of his parents were still pleading with God for him.

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[14] Methodist Magazine, 1824, pp. 126, 330.

[15] Memoir of Rev. John Smith, by Richard Treffry, Jr. chap 1.

In 1812 a revival of religion prevailed in Cudworth. One of his young kindred was converted, and the reckless youth was induced by curiosity to revisit the town. He was affected by the scenes which he there witnessed. His pious mother addressed to him a seasonable word. On his way back to Barnsley he suddenly stopped, and exclaimed with deep emotion to a comrade, "I am resolved to live a new life!" It was the critical moment of his history. He immediately turned back to Cudworth, and that evening he was upon his knees in the midst of its prayer-meeting calling upon his friends to pray for him, and weeping with uncontrollable anguish.

At the close of the meeting a group of Methodists accompanied him to his father's house, and continued their supplications for him. The father, who had been absent at an appointment on the circuit as a local preacher, returned late, and on entering his dwelling found his Christian neighbors praying and rejoicing over two of his children, who were upon their knees, where he had so often wept and prayed for them; and one of them was his prodigal son. The burden of years of parental anxiety fell from his soul at the sight. That night the awakened youth passed from death unto life, and thenceforward was a "burning and a shining light" in the Church of God.

He now became an assiduous student of the Bible, keeping it before him on the counter of the shop in which he was employed, for every moment of leisure. He endeavored to rescue his late associates in dissipation, and two of them he led into the Church, the first-fruits, remarks his biographer, of a mighty harvest.

His mind was quickened by his change, and his aspirations for knowledge became intense. The next year he entered an academy at Leeds, where he enjoyed the advantage of the instructions and example of David Stoner, who had not yet entered the itinerant ministry, and who became his intimate friend for life. The contrast between their natural dispositions was a mutual attraction, the sober, if not severe thoughtfulness of Stoner being a good counterpart to Smith's vivacious and sanguine temperament. They both became examples of the primitive earnestness of the Methodist ministry combined with the intellectual traits demanded by the later wants of the Church.

In 1814 Smith began to address public assemblies as a local preacher, but not without fear and trembling. He shrunk from his first appointment, leaving it for some one else to fill. Stoner inspired his drooping courage, and induced him to try again. He attempted to do so in the place where Stoner himself had preached his first sermon. He had not advanced far in the discourse before he faltered and sat down. In a later attempt he succeeded, and the next year we find him preaching in the large chapels of Leeds. In the revival which took place there, and extended over most of the York circuit in 1815 and 1816, when three hundred and fifty converts were gathered into the societies in about twelve months, it was found necessary to erect a new chapel at Skeldergate; an additional preacher was therefore required, and Smith was employed. He thus began his itinerant ministry. His removal to York was an important event in his career; he there studied the Methodistic views of Sanctification, and consecrated himself to the highest Christian life. His ministrations now took that tone of intense earnestness and irresistible power which rendered them so remarkably effective during the remainder of his life. His sermons had been of the usual mechanical form, homiletic in the modern sense of that term, conscientiously prepared, but artificially elaborate; he now saw that they were not modeled after the preaching of Christ and his apostles, and, indeed, of the ante-Nicene Church generally. They became powerfully hortatory; home-directed appeals to the conscience and heart, rather than formal addresses to the intellect.

The Conference received him on trial in 1816, and thenceforward, during this decade, he labored with increasing usefulness on York, Barnard Castle, Brighton, Windsor, and

Frome Circuits. His daily life was consecrated to his own improvement in holiness and to the direct work of saving souls. His zeal was intense, his faith mighty. Faith was his great theme; and, like Carvosso, he seemed to have comprehended it so thoroughly, by his own experience, that he had peculiar facility in teaching it to others. When he ascended the pulpit he believed that the word would have effect, and it had effect. When he knelt with broken-hearted penitents he believed the divine promises to them, and so prayed with and counseled them that it seemed impossible for them not to catch his own trustful spirit, and to rise up rejoicing. When he accosted a godless man in the street, or at a table, (and this was habitual with him,) he believed that the Holy Spirit would empower the brief word, and often did extraordinary conversions follow it. "To the efficacy of faith," says his biographer, "he sets no limits. 'If,' he said, 'a man were as black as a devil, and had upon him all the sins that were ever committed, would he but begin to believe, God would save him.' Again, I have heard him say: 'That is the way I rise. I will not suffer myself to dwell on my unfaithfulness; if I did I should despond.' On my asking him as to his confidence of final salvation, he replied that he had 'no doubt whatever on that subject;' but to prevent misconception, he added, 'not that I have any peculiar assurance of it, but I know I shall get to heaven, because I am determined to believe.'" He guarded cautiously, however, against the abuse of this distinctive doctrine of Christianity. No Antinomian sophistry was mixed with it; the faith which he taught was to follow repentance, and to be followed by good works. The vital principle of all holy living, inward and outward, its practical activity was required, as the necessary proof of its very existence. Continually did he thus lead inquiring minds into the divine life. Many were the instances in which casual visitors, from other parts of the country, returned from his appointments rejoicing in the hope of the Gospel; many the examples of individual conversion while he was in the act of preaching. His brief addresses in social meetings were often accompanied with overpowering effect. In a visit to City Road Chapel, where he attended a watch-night, "he had great enlargement in delivering an exhortation, and while he was afterward engaged in prayer the influence of the Holy Spirit descended in an unusual manner. The effect was extraordinary. Some cried aloud under a consciousness of their sin and peril, some were unable to repress exclamations of praise to God, while others were so overwhelmed as to be obliged to retire from the chapel." On all occasions his strong faith expected these results, even on such as were usually rather scenes of ceremony than of direct spiritual effect. At the opening of a new chapel in Chichester he "had great liberty of speech. During the concluding prayer the influence of God descended on the congregation in a remarkable manner, and several groaned audibly under the burden of their sins. He cried out, 'Now let your hearts yield!' and began to pray again. He then came down from the pulpit and, with the resident preacher, continued to plead with God on behalf of the distressed. In his usual way he immediately addressed those individuals who were seeking salvation, and exhorted them to trust in Christ for a present deliverance. Arrangements had been made for letting the seats in the chapel, but all other business was forgotten in the urgency of the cries of penitent sinners, and the meeting was protracted to a late hour. Nine persons were ascertained that evening to have been brought into the enjoyment of the pardoning love of God, and many others still remained under a deep concern for their souls."

When he went to Brighton circuit, where he labored from 1818 to 1820, it had been some time in a state of declension; but his powerful labors aroused it, and he was soon able to write, "God is working among us. Many of the people are rising. Several are panting for entire sanctification. Their expectation shall not be cut off: God will speak for himself. He will raise up in this Antinomian country, I trust, many witnesses of his power to save from all sin, and to keep in that state." Wherever he preached more or less of his people caught his earnest spirit, and new energy was infused into the Churches.

His next circuit was Windsor; it had but three feeble societies beyond the "circuit town." Many neighboring villages, with large masses of population, were very inadequately supplied with evangelical instruction, some not at all. Few districts in England, it is said, presented so many indications of spiritual destitution; but his usual success attended him even in places which had been some time abandoned from the list of appointments, for no obstacle could stand before the energy of his inspired soul. His zealous appeals at first surprised and then aroused the slumbering people. Individuals were converted before he descended the pulpit, and, when leaving the chapel, they met him in the aisles with their grateful confessions of Christ, or remained kneeling on the floor, or stood up in the gallery to testify to the retiring people the salvation they had received. He often preached out of doors, particularly in towns where there were no Methodist chapels, and he thus succeeded in organizing societies in places never before visited by the itinerants; and "on every hand pleasing prospects of usefulness began to present themselves." He was especially successful among the soldiers of Windsor, and striking examples of piety and usefulness were soon seen in its barracks. We continually read, as we turn over the pages of his Memoirs, of the power of his preaching, of "the Spirit of God descending on the people," of the "baptism of fire upon the congregation," of "fifteen or sixteen persons converted" at a single meeting. "Nothing," says his biographer, "can convey to the reader, who never witnessed the exertions of the man, the degree of intense fervor to which he was wrought up by the time he had finished his sermon. He seemed inspired and rapt, and to a certain degree his auditors were carried with him." His zeal sometimes expressed itself in a manner which would be inexpedient in most men, but which, from his peculiar and well-known character, not only produced no bad, but very salutary effects. After the conclusion of an awakening sermon, which was soon to be followed by a prayer-meeting, he "rushed out into the street, and lifting up his mighty voice, so that the people in their houses could distinctly hear him, he called on them to come and receive the blessing of a present salvation. Then returning into the chapel, he proceeded to assist in carrying on the prayer-meeting, and had the happiness of seeing that night about twenty souls delivered from the burden of their sins, as were two more by his instrumentality on the following morning."

His labors on the Windsor circuit from 1820 to 1822 revived and reinforced it, more or less, in all its appointments. His home was resorted to by awakened persons, sometimes by the most degraded sinners, who sought counsel and comfort for their alarmed consciences. His public meetings were often scenes of remarkable interest, and it was affecting to see the rudest minds, long neglected and hardly above the condition of heathen, receive there their first impressions of divine truth and their first religious consolation. On one occasion, at Windsor, he saw near the door of the chapel a wretched looking woman, staring with vacant surprise at the solemn spectacle of the prayer-meeting. She was poverty-stricken, and, as he afterward learned, gained a scanty living by gathering water-cresses. Her ignorance was extreme, and she might have been supposed incapable of just religious impressions without better instruction. Smith did not so judge her. He went to her and said, "Woman, get down on your knees and begin to pray." She immediately knelt and asked, "What shall I say, sir?" "Ask God to give you true repentance." For the first time she attempted to pray: "Lord, give me true repentance." She began to tremble, and with great anxiety inquired, "What shall I do now? what shall I pray for?" "Ask God to have mercy upon you," said the preacher. "Lord, have mercy upon me, a poor sinner, a guilty sinner!" she cried. He thus led her on, teaching her the very alphabet of Christianity. This example was characteristic of the Methodist evangelists. No ignorance, no vice was deemed by them invincible, for they assumed that supernatural grace co-operated with their endeavors, and could do all things; an assumption without which the Gospel would have seemed to them impracticable, self-contradictory, and a delusion. The poor praying woman was that night clearly converted, and comforted with the peace of God. The Church trained her in the Christian life, and when the faithful evangelist had completed his appointment, and was about to leave Windsor for another circuit, she came with many others to look once more on him who had been her best friend. Her emotions were too deep for words. When he reached out his hand to her she fell upon her knees, her heart melting with unutterable gratitude. "The preacher," says the narrator, "was deeply affected, and no doubt that moment amply repaid him for all his labors in the circuit." Such an illustration of his usefulness is more significant than pages of general remarks could be; for what better trophy of the Gospel of salvation could he present in the Church, or even in heaven, than such a rescued soul?

His last circuit, in the present decade, was that of Frome. His ministry became now more than ever demonstrative. The immediate personal salvation of souls was his steady aim, for he knew that all other interests of the Church would be guaranteed by such success. Nor did he rely upon unusual means for it. "Protracted meetings," attended with the neglect of the ordinary duties of life, he did not approve or need; every sermon, every religious assembly, was to him the appropriate means of direct spiritual good to the people. It would be impossible to trace, in detail, his usefulness on the Frome circuit; it was immediate and almost universal. At the beginning of 1823 he writes: "We admitted on trial last quarter upward of two hundred and seventy. We had about the same number of conversions. Many obtained the blessing of entire sanctification. Since the quarter-day we have given nearly a hundred notes of admittance, and we have had about the same number of conversions. The work is likely to go on. The people very generally are getting into action. They look for present blessings in their meetings. Some of the leaders and local preachers are very active and successful. I have frequently seen eight or ten souls saved at a meeting; I think twenty, more than thrice; and once, at Frome, between thirty and forty. This blessed work melts me into grateful love to God."

We read of his success from appointment to appointment; five, ten, twenty, forty individuals awakened or converted at a single service. Even at missionary celebrations he expected the usual spiritual effect to attend his labors, and followed them with his usual prayer-meeting. At Shepton, on one of these occasions, "numbers," he writes, "were in deep distress, and many found peace with God. The work is still going on, and fifty have been saved since the missionary meeting." He sought out the vicious and degraded who came not within the reach of his ordinary public labors; none were too depraved for his hopeful sympathy, no place too debased for his Christian visits. "No persons," says his biographer, "for whose salvation he was particularly interested, could be secure from his efforts. If they even sought the resorts of drunkards and harlots, they were not at all cut off from his influence. Sometimes when he discovered them he succeeded in leading them away, and in more than one instance he kneeled on the floor of a haunt of intemperance till the individual for whom he interceded obtained the salvation of God, in the presence of those who had been the companions of his excesses."

His prayers had even more power than his sermons. He often spent the whole night in secret intercession. His public and social prayers were remarkable for their simplicity and directness, and are described as being attended with a marvelous power, "such as multitudes have acknowledged exceeded anything which they ever experienced. Not unfrequently the people were so affected by them that nature itself has sunk, and persons have been removed from the scene in a state of insensibility." And these results were as common when his manner was tranquil and placid as when it was peculiarly impassioned. In fine, this devoted man was one of the most successful preachers of Methodism during these times and during his remaining life. Like David Stoner, he belonged to the class of evangelists which Bramwell had so long represented, men "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," whose deep personal piety clothed them with an irresistible moral power in their public services, and who passed among the Churches like "flames of fire."

During the whole of our present period, and for some years later, the northern parts of England were the scenes of no little religious excitement, under the labors of Hodgson Casson. He was one of those extraordinary men whom Methodism so often pressed into its services, not only guarding their eccentricities by its rigorous discipline, but consecrating their peculiarities in such manner that they became the means of drawing within the reach of the Gospel a class of untutored minds which might otherwise have been inaccessible to it. No pen can draw a just portrait of Hodgson Casson. His mental characteristics were astonishing, and irresistibly attractive to the common people; while his pure and fervid piety, indefatigable labors, aptness of language, moral heroism, overflowing cheerfulness, and almost invariable usefulness, disarmed the criticism of more fastidious hearers. Throughout the northern circuits are still current the wonderful stories of his eccentricities, of his courage, and of the miracles of his success. He combined the artlessness of a child, the meekness of a saint, and the boldness of a lion. No place was too degraded, or too notorious or dangerous for him to enter it with the Gospel. He confronted the worst men with his exhortations, arresting their attention by his singular remarks, or subduing them by his evident courage or his tender, sympathetic spirit. Hundreds of trophies did he bear into the Church from the lowest and most hopeless localities of the demoralized communities to which he was wisely appointed by the Conference. He would boldly charge home, with his spiritual armor, upon the strongest holds of depravity at fairs, merry-makings, and drinking-houses. "Passing," says a Methodist writer, "one of the low public houses to be found in every seaport, he heard the sound of music, revelry, and dance in an upper room, while on the first floor, or bar-room, a crowd of riotous 'longshore men' were quarreling and brawling. Never pausing to think of the personal risk he encountered, he entered, pushed through the crowd below, ascended the rickety stairs, and soon stood in the center of the group of dancers. His gaunt but muscular form, clothed in black, immediately arrested attention. Without giving the revelers time to recover from their surprise, he exclaimed with the full power of his stentorian lungs: "There now, you have had dancing enough for a while; let us pray. Down upon your knees, every man and woman of you." The entire group seemed deprived of all power of resistance, (and this was no isolated instance of the kind,) the piping and the dancing ceased; soon his powerful voice was heard in prayer; strong cries and groans speedily followed from those who but a few moments before were whirling in the dance; the astonished landlord rushed up stairs, but fled affrighted when he beheld the scene; the drunken crowd below slunk away; and Casson remained the livelong night praying and exhorting, ceasing not until many of his strange congregation had obtained mercy, and went to their homes new creatures in Christ Jesus."[16]

Such was but an example of the boldness and success of this faithful itinerant. From the year 1815, in which he set out, staff in hand, to walk a hundred and twenty miles to his first circuit, till he broke down with age and the labors of about a quarter of a century, did he maintain unrelaxed his energy and usefulness, and few of his fellow-laborers reported at the successive Conferences larger reinforcements of their circuits.

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[16] West's Sketches of Wesleyan Preachers, p. 202. New York, 1848

Hodgson Casson was born at Workington, Cumberland, in 1788.[17] The neglect of his early education, and even his naturally generous and buoyant temper, rendered him an easy prey to the vices of youth. His hilarious humor attracted about him a circle of corrupt comrades. He became their leader, and "together they plunged into the vortex of dissipation and folly." But such ebullient natures are often found to be singularly susceptible of the best moral impressions. Casson was seldom without aspirations for better things. "I endeavored," he writes, "to feed the devil's swine with witticisms, in which I had become a tolerable proficient; but although my companions were gratified, it was not so with me; though I fain 'would have filled my belly with the husks which the swine did eat,' yet there remained an aching void." He felt, he says, the "strivings of the Divine Spirit," but "did not understand them," for he had no suitable guide. He "wept much, and used diligently fragments of the Church prayers." He broke away from his dissipated associates, but his impressible nature yielded again and again to their temptations. "I was carried captive," he says, "by my besetting sins, such as card-playing, dancing, balls, etc., but still I was unhappy." He went ten miles to the last of his gay resorts, but was so wretched that he turned away from them forever. He heard a humble Methodist preacher, and was so thoroughly awakened that the tears flowed down his cheeks, and he began to pray in anguish of spirit, "Lord, bless me! teach me! pardon my sins!" He found his way into a class-meeting; its fervent-minded members gathered around him and directed him to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and while they were praying for him, light and comfort broke in upon his struggling spirit.

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[17] Life and Labors of Hodgson Casson, by A. Steele. London, 1854.

"Halleluiah to the Lamb!" he wrote years afterward, as he referred to the memorable hour.

It was not long before he was active in religious labors. He went from house to house testifying of the grace of God which he had experienced, and astonishing his old associates with his new ideas.

His brethren placed his name on the local preachers' plan. He preached on the highways and in the market-places as well as in the chapels. Great excitement ensued, and many reckless men were reformed; but others persecuted him. His life was even endangered, and at one time a mob of Papists, returning from mass, assailed him with bludgeons and stones till they supposed he was dead. He bore on his head the honorable marks of this assault through life, and was always afterward subject to epileptic fits, which often interfered with his labors. He endured them, however, not only without a resentful reflection, but with joyful thankfulness that he was permitted to suffer for Christ. "Bless the Lord!" was usually the first utterance of the good man as he arose from the earth after these frequent convulsions. His religious cheerfulness could be damped by no suffering.

He applied diligently to study, spending two entire nights a week at his books. After five years of such self-improvement in the local ministry, he was received on probation by the Conference, and set out rejoicing on his foot journey to his distant circuit. It was in Scotland, and he found the frigid Caledonian temperament strangely in contrast with that of his English Methodist brethren. His congregations were small and impassive, but his zealous and eccentric spirit could not be discouraged. Sallying out into the streets of Kilmarnock, with a chair upon his shoulders, he cried aloud, "A loup! a loup!"[18] The people hastened to their doors, a crowd followed after him, increasing as he went on, and when he arrived at a convenient spot he had a congregation before him. Mounting his chair, he proclaimed, from

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[18] Scotch for a sale.

Isaiah lv, 1, the invitation to come and "buy wine and milk without money." When he concluded, he called upon the wondering throng to attend his preaching at the Wesleyan chapel. He was successful, and saw immediately an increase of his regular hearers. His eccentricities were, indeed, astonishing, and not to be imitated; with most men they would have been pernicious whimsicalities; but being thoroughly genuine, the natural expression of his singular mind, and always marked by his deep, yet cheerful piety, they seemed excusable, if not admirable, to most of his hearers. The common people, especially, hung upon his ministry. Among the colliery villages of the North he was welcomed from appointment to appointment, with the liveliest demonstrations of joy. His preaching was suited to win both the attention and the affection of the simple people; and it was an affecting sight, says his biographer, "to mark the interest with which they listened to those glowing descriptions of divine truth which he brought before them; the tears, ever and anon coursing down their black faces, affording decisive evidence that truth had secured a lodgment in their hearts. Some of this class of men are yet recognized as the seals of his ministry, and are now sustaining important and useful offices in the Church of God, to whom the name of the instrument of their conversion 'is as ointment poured forth.'" His exhortations often took a strain of powerful eloquence. One of his fellow-laborers says that in his sermons there were frequent strokes of wit, and of keen invention, which fixed the attention of his hearers; but he would appeal to the reckless sinner with such terrifying thunders that he made him feel as though he stood near the awful mount, trembling, while the lightning flashed upon his guilty conscience. At such times there was a singular majesty and simplicity in his language, united with great pathos and compassionate sympathy, which often melted down a whole assembly, while many with broken hearts cried out, 'What must we do to be saved?'

He was sent to Kendal circuit in 1817; it was in a depressed state, embarrassed with debts and languid in its piety. He soon saw it relieved of its financial perplexities, and alive with religious interest. His congregations were thronged. He revived Wesley's five o'clock morning services, and multiplied prayer-meetings. In Kendal, the circuit town, his preaching was attended with extraordinary effect; his hearers were sometimes overpowered by it, and sobbed and prayed aloud. A respectable woman, who, with many others, manifested deep emotion at one of the meetings, found, on returning to her home, that her husband had already been informed of the fact. He violently reproached her for it. The next evening he himself stood in the crowd listening to Casson; an irresistible interest pervaded the services, and many persons were awakened and converted on the spot. At the close of the meeting, the preacher invited all such to approach the altar, that he might counsel them. They formed a circle around him, and in the group were the husband and wife, who fell into each other's arms, weeping and rejoicing at the unexpected meeting. Such a scene was touching to all the spectators, but peculiarly so to Casson's susceptible sympathies. With a full heart, but with his usual quaintness, he exclaimed: "You have taken each other for better and for worse; the worse has come first, and it will now be all the better." The fruit of this meeting was a new Methodist class formed on the spot.

Many are the examples, of his devoted life and his surprising usefulness, still remembered on the Kendal circuit. He would abruptly enter the inns, and "exhort" the village convivialists, who, though disposed at first to make merry at his presence, and to offer him their glasses, were quickly subdued, and fell one after another upon their knees around him, weeping as he prayed for them. His words of casual and quaint admonition had singular power over rude minds. As he was going on the highway to one of his appointments he saw a Sabbath-breaker working on the moor; Casson warned him of his sin, and begged him to walk along with him and argue the subject. The poor man, drawn by his words, trudged by his side, bearing his spade on his shoulder. Before long they were both upon their knees praying on the highway. The man trembled, says the narrator, and uniting with Casson in fervent prayer, obtained a sense of the divine mercy before they rose. The itinerant took him to the place of preaching, rejoicing over him as "a trophy of saving grace." Passing in the street on another Sunday, he saw through a window an habitual Sabbath-breaker, at work within. A sudden knock on the glass startled the young man; a telling word of exhortation followed. The arrow reached his conscience: he followed Casson to the chapel, was converted, became a member of the Church, and was called into the ministry. "I shot a man through the window without breaking the glass," would the quaint itinerant remark, when relating this case in familiar conversation. His bow thus ever "abode in strength;" its arrows flew in all directions, often at a venture, but seldom without effect. A great proportion of his usefulness resulted from such casual appeals. He saw a company of boisterous Sabbath-breakers in a field and addressed them in his usual style. A ruffian "chimney-sweep," noted in the neighborhood for his turbulence, seized a stone to throw at him; but by Casson's exhortations he was subdued, and promised to attend the Methodist chapel that evening. "Remember your promise," cried the preacher at parting, "and if you do not I will meet you at the bar of God." The young man did not intend to keep it; but the warning fastened upon his conscience, and he could not resist it. Ashamed of his degraded appearance, he went to the chapel by a back way, and hid himself in a corner under the gallery. Casson preached with great power. "I sweat from head to foot," said the youth afterward; "I tried to get out again and again, but could not." He went home that night awakened to a new life, and became a member of the society. His wife experienced the same gracious change; his family was trained up in piety; and he became a local preacher and a class leader.

It is impossible to estimate this extraordinary man but by such examples, for, though useful in the pulpit, his success out of it was probably greater. Colloquial exhortation was his characteristic ability. Whole circuits were thus reinforced with members, and kept active with revivals. Men for whom others would have had little or no hope, were sought out by him as the most appropriate objects of Christian labor. The marks of vice, the rags of poverty could not disguise to him the immortal soul beneath them. He knew that in his own most reckless years the Divine Spirit had been almost continually striving with his conscience; he inferred from his experience that it was so with every apparent offcast he met. It was impossible to induce these poor, neglected creatures to enter places of public worship, for, degraded as they were, they had too much self-respect to exhibit their degradation and tatters in the religious assembly. He sought them, therefore, in their own resorts. When warning failed, he frequently had recourse to prayer on the spot; and he was mighty in intercession. His knees were hardened and horny, from much kneeling in private and in public; and, says a fellow-evangelist, the knees of his clothes were frequently patched before they had been long worn—honorable badges both of his devotion and of his poverty. "He seemed to me," says another fellow-laborer, "to have a more ready and easy access to God in prayer than any other man I ever met with. I never spent a quarter of an hour with him without receiving the impression that he lived in the spirit of prayer, that his sole delight was in God, and in doing his will." And another itinerant adds: 'I never knew a man who seemed to be so much in his element in prayer as he was, nor one who had so much power in prayer; the influence of this habit was always strikingly manifest; cold formalism never seemed comfortable in his presence. You will receive this description of him from every circuit." Families with which he lodged, as he traveled his circuits, said that he spent a great part of his leisure time on his knees, and, like his Divine Master, would rise "a great while before day" for prayer. He sometimes continued all night in supplications. The Methodists of Burnside still venerate as "Casson's Oak" a hollow tree to which he used to repair for devotion when on that part of his circuit. Of course such a man could not but be powerful in his simple ministrations, for he came forth from the presence of God into the midst of the people, and, as with Moses descending from the mount, the divine glory shone around him. At the conclusion of his two years' labors on Kendal circuit, he left it with a third more members in its societies than he had found there.

In 1819 he was appointed to Brough and Penrith circuit, where the same diligence produced the same results. From house to house, and in the fields, he preached to such as would not come to the chapels. His eccentricities attracted to the latter many who would, otherwise, never have entered them. He would gather about him a company of his zealous brethren, and march with them along the street to the place of worship, singing Charles Wesley's triumphant lyrics; while the wretched people, charmed by the music or by curiosity, followed him in processions into the chapel. At such times his congregation presented a strange appearance; "men without coats, women without bonnets, having hurried, on the spur of the moment, to the house of God," and they always found in him a fitting preacher. His simplicity, his aptness, his warmth of natural sympathy as well as of religious feeling, and, it must be added, his surprising but devout humor, struck their attention, and touched their hearts in a manner which made them feel that the occasion and the man were indeed their own. At Dufton, Murton, Kirkoswald, and other villages beyond Penrith, "gracious outpourings of the Spirit were vouchsafed" to his labors, and he reported a gain of a hundred and forty members when he left the circuit.

In 1821 he was sent to Dumfries. The society had almost dwindled away; but his usual success attended him, and in less than a year, writing to a friend, he says: "When I arrived here I could not find thirty members; yet I felt the word of God as fire in my bones, and resolved to labor with all my soul and strength. I preached, prayed, and visited wherever I could find an open door, and, in the different neighborhoods, invited the people to attend. Often have I seen them on such occasions melted into tears, and by heavy sighs, or broken accents, giving vent to their sorrowful feelings, or crying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Many have been brought to God. At first we had only one prayer-meeting during the week; soon we had two, then three. Our congregations are greatly increased on the Sabbath evenings; hundreds have stood at the door who could not gain admittance. Our number of members has increased from thirty to above one hundred, most of whom declare that they have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

The last two years of this decade he spent on the Richmond and Reeth circuits, where his success was remarkable, "being signalized," says his biographer, "by one of the most glorious revivals ever known in those dales." On the Reeth side of the circuit alone the number of members increased from four hundred to more than nine hundred, and the result was permanent. He preached between thirty and forty times a month, and, he adds, "sung and prayed almost without ceasing night after night." He had often three or four, and sometimes ten converted in a meeting.

On the Gateshead, the Durham, the North Shields, the Birstal circuits did this humble but useful evangelist labor in like manner and with like success, till his infirm health compelled him to retire among the "supernumerary" members of the Conference; hundreds of converts being usually added to the societies by the time his appointments concluded. We are told that "by many he was considered as one of the most popular preachers in the north of England; and his ministry was highly appreciated, not because of his eccentricities, but for the rich and holy unction which attended it." He was active in the new missionary movements of the Church; and it is said that the natural richness of his mind was manifest on missionary occasions in the beauty and simplicity of his imagery, and the striking aptness of his arguments and appeals. He diffused the charm of his own cheerfulness over the proceedings, and thus opened the hearts and pockets of the people.

The necessity of retreating to the supernumerary ranks was the greatest trial of his life. His services were still eagerly sought by the Churches. He had acquired a popular name, and if his former brilliancy of mind was not exhibited, yet he retained the same rich savor of evangelical piety, the same fervent compassion for neglected and perishing men. He labored on as he had strength, till at last his increasing infirmities admonished him that he must cease entirely his favorite work and depart to his rest. "I am packed up and all ready," he said when he could preach no more. He died in the peace of the Gospel, in the sixty-third year of his life and the thirty-sixth of his ministry.

Such are but examples of the moral vigor of Methodism during this period, and we cannot be surprised that, with such laborers, some of them suited to the highest, others to the lowest minds, it gained in these ten years more than fifty-two thousand members, after deducting all its losses by death, emigration, and other causes.

Settled and prosperous, the Connection welcomed as seasonable the arrival of John Emory, the first of the American representatives of Methodism to the English Conference. Though the adjustment of questions affecting the relative positions, in Canada, of the British and American Methodist bodies, was the immediate design of this official visit, it was also deemed desirable that the two communions should confirm their old harmony by stated representative intercourse.[19] The overture was properly first made by the

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[19] Letter of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Emory's Life, by his Son, p. 94. New York, 1841.

American Church, if not in consideration of the numerical superiority which it had now attained, yet in grateful acknowledgment that England had, half a century before, sent some of its ablest preachers to assist in founding American Methodism. Emory, charged with the representation of the American General Conference, reached London on the 4th of July, 1820, and was entertained at the Mission House, Hatton Garden, in the family of Joseph Taylor, the resident secretary. He was presented to the Missionary Committee, Benson, Watson, Bunting, Butterworth, and other leading members, being present. They approved unanimously his plan for the settlement of the Canadian question, the principal provision of which was that the preachers of the Wesleyan body should occupy Lower Canada, and those of the Methodist Episcopal Church Upper Canada. The unity of the Methodists throughout the world was emphatically avowed, as of "the most sacred and paramount importance," by the most distinguished members of the committee, and the delegate saw by this preliminary interview that his mission was to be happily successful. The decision of the committee was yet subject to the revision of the Conference at Liverpool. Emory was introduced to this body by Bunting, its president, on the 26th and was received with hearty greetings. He found a dignified and numerous assembly, dispatching its business with remarkable energy and harmony, in session from six o'clock A. M. to eight, from nine to near one, and from half past two till five; the evenings being occupied with committee meetings and public services. He addressed the session on the 27th, sketching the progress of American Methodism, and predicting that the two bodies would yet compass the world and "shake hands at the Pacific," a prophecy which has been fulfilled. They approved the decision of the missionary committee respecting Canada, and the proposal for a periodical interchange of delegates, and also provided for an exchange of all new publications of the publishing houses of the two bodies. Clarke, Watson, and others made congratulatory speeches on the occasion, Clarke eulogizing the American Methodist episcopacy as "of a truly apostolic and primitive character," and Watson confirming the opinion, in reply to some dissenting remarks of other members. Emory preached before the Conference an able sermon, which it published. His portrait was also given in its Magazine, and every possible courtesy was bestowed upon him. Entwisle says, it is impossible to describe the interest excited by his visit; he speaks of him as "a thin, spare man, about thirty-five years of age; modest, grave, and pious in his appearance and spirit, very intelligent and interesting as a speaker, and without the least parade or display."[20] Emory was much interested in the proceedings of the Conference. He describes the reception of candidates into membership. Each related his Christian experience before a large public assembly on the preceding evening. The Conference in full session, in presence of a crowded congregation, received the probationers as they stood on a bench before the President, who, after examining them, ordained them without imposition of hands, but "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Singing and prayer followed, then an elaborate address by the President, on the ministerial office, and concluding devotions. The discussion of the Appointments was a novel fact to the visitor, and in contrast with the American usage. The list, prepared by a committee before the session, was reported to the Conference and published throughout the country; and preachers and people had the opportunity of petitioning or remonstrating. "This," he remarks, "is often done in strong terms, and gives much trouble; a preacher of any standing is very seldom sent where he is not willing to go." On the 8th of August he again addressed the Conference, and was cordially answered by the President; the Lord's Supper was administered and the body adjourned. It had entirely met the wishes of the American delegate. During his farther brief stay in the country he was treated with lavish attention. He was entertained at Clarke's home, Millbrook, with jubilant hospitality. The venerable commentator displayed an ensign on his house, and regretted that he had not the American flag to place by its side. "It is a beautiful place," wrote Emory, "and well improved: a handsome house, well furnished, and outbuildings. Dr. Clarke *writes* all his Commentary. 'No scissors or paste,' he said to me, 'or I could soon make acres of notes.'" He admired the geniality of the great scholar, and gives us an agreeable glimpse of his person and manners. "He was exceedingly pleasant during the whole time, and ran up stairs like a boy to bring me a pamphlet. He is sixty years of age; his hair is white; he has a ruddy, healthful complexion; his person is rather above the middle size, but not corpulent; he has a Scotch-Irish appearance and brogue, but is masterly in speaking, energetic, yet plain. He wears a blue short coat, black vest, and small clothes; gray stockings, with shoes." Emory dined with Samuel Drew, who discussed his favorite metaphysical subtleties on the resurrection, "distinguishing an identity of numerical particles, of modification, and of personality." He made rapid excursions to Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds, and other primitive seats of Methodism. Most deeply was he interested, however, in beholding Kennington Common and Moorfields; they revived "with solemn feelings the recollection of the multitudes now no more," who had there heard the mighty words of Whitefield and Wesley. He met in the metropolis Atmore, Benson, and Vasey who went to America with Whatcoat. Atmore, who resided at City Road parsonage, showed him the chamber in which Wesley died, "the spot where he triumphed over his last enemy, and, in the moment of victory, fled exulting to happier worlds, and his tomb in the cemetery behind the chapel." He describes the Mission House as a commodious building, well furnished, and in an agreeable situation. One of the stated secretaries resided in it with his family, and devoted his time to the superintendence of the institution, and of the business of the missions generally. The missionary committee met there weekly for the transaction of business. The room appropriated to their use was well suited to the purpose, having, besides the ordinary furniture, a missionary library, and being hung round with maps of all parts of the world, but especially of those where Methodist missions were established or proposed. It had a missionary museum, containing many curiosities sent from heathen lands. Here those missionaries who were preparing to go abroad lodged while in London, and were not only furnished with necessary books and clothing, but also with such instructions as were suited to their respective destinations. Their outfit and support were all regulated on fixed principles, according to the place to which they were to go. Two clerks and a boy were in constant employment, under the direction of the resident secretary, and the expenses of the whole establishment, with those of all the missionaries, were paid exclusively from the missionary fund. To Emory this edifice was monumental of the character of the Methodistic movement, as a scheme of universal evangelization; he saw thus prefigured the final phase of its development, its missionary character, and went from the sight, to the Liverpool Conference, to salute the assembled ministry with the prediction which many of his contemporaries were to see verified, that the evangelists of British and American Methodism would compass the earth, and meet on the shores of the Pacific.

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[20] Entwisle's Mem., chap. 14.

On the first of September he embarked for America. In 1824 the first British delegates to the Methodist Episcopal Church, Richard Reece and John Hannah, were sent to reciprocate the courtesy of the American General Conference. They spent some time in visiting the societies, from Lynn, Mass., to Winchester, Va.,[21] and attended the session of 1824 at Baltimore, where they were greeted by Bishops

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[21] See their Letters in the Meth. Mag., 1824–1826. An account of their visit will be given in the history of the M. E. Church.

M'Kendree, George, and Roberts, and a hundred and twenty-nine delegates from all parts of the nation. Their sermons and addresses spread a new interest for the common cause throughout the Church; the essential unity of all Methodists was recognized with a sort of denominational enthusiasm; and their consciousness of a great common destiny, to affect the entire world, was profoundly deepened. The Methodist Episcopal Church, occupied, in providing for the moral wants of much of the western continent, was already thoroughly missionary in its spirit; but it had not yet been able to share with the parent Church in those plans of universal propagandism which it nevertheless acknowledged to be the true expression of the genius of Methodism. This Conference sent an address to its British brethren, in which it affirmed both the unity of their common work and its universal destination. Alluding to the Wesleyan delegates, it said: "Their presence with us has drawn the cords of brotherly love still closer, has seemed to introduce you more immediately before us, and in all our intercourse with them, both social and public, we have been made to feel more sensibly than ever, that in doctrine and discipline, in experience and practice, and in the great object of evangelizing the world, the British and American Methodists are one. And we devoutly pray that they may ever so remain. We are also following you, though at a humble distance, in your missionary exertions. But such is the extent, and increasing extent, of our work here, that we cannot find means or men for foreign missions. The increase of our population is perhaps unparalleled; and it is widely scattered over an extensive continent. To keep pace with it, under such circumstances, requires much labor and much privation. In addition to this, the Lord, as you have heard, has opened for us a great and effectual door among the aborigines of our country. Still we hope the time is not far distant when we shall join hands on the Asiatic shores of the Pacific ocean. We are constantly advancing in our labors toward the West, and you are extending in the East, not only on the Continent, but over the islands of the sea. Is it chimerical, then, to suppose that at some future day we shall have compassed this earth, and girded it round with glorious bands of Gospel truth? O no! faith says it shall be done."[22] Thus, by maintaining its internal life—an earnest ministry and revivals—by cementing its moral if not its ecclesiastical unity, and by extending its calculations to the whole human race, was the denomination taking, more and more, its noblest historical attitude, its general missionary character.

And here we may appropriately pause to survey more fully this important development of its history. It invites us to new fields, on which were to be re-enacted, in the ends of the earth, the heroic scenes of the domestic struggles and triumphs of the great movement.

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[22] Am. Meth. Mag., 1824, pp. 348, 349. New York.

CHAPTER XI.

MISSIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF METHODISM: WEST INDIES AND CEYLON.

The Three Phases of Methodist History—Methodistic Propagandism—Early Foreign Attempts—The Idea of Universal Evangelization—Coke's Fifth Voyage to America—Birthday Reflections—Exciting Scenes in the West Indies—Persecution of Missionaries—Their Triumphs—An extraordinary Death—Improvement of the Slaves—Rapid Extension of the Missions—They reach the South American Continent—Results—Emancipation—The Last Night of Slavery—Coke before the Conference of 1813 in behalf of India—British Sway in the East—Lord Clive and the Battle of Plassey—Coke's Letter to Wilberforce respecting an Indian Bishopric—He prevails with the Conference—His Voyage—His Death and Burial at Sea—Effect of his Death on the Church at Home—Organization of the First Missionary Society at Leeds—Origin of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society.

METHODISTS have always been practical believers in Divine Providence. Such Wesley taught them to be by both his doctrine and example. He left them a notable sermon, in which he denies the common distinction between a "general" and a "particular" providence, proving the latter to be necessary to the former. Much of the moral force of the denomination has arisen from its prevalent belief that it has been signalized by Providence, and that, therefore, extraordinary providential designs are to be accomplished by it.

There have been three well-defined stages in its progress. The first was comprised in the period of Wesley's personal ministry, in which the movement was rapidly extended in both hemispheres, and was at last more or less consolidated into an organic system.

The second was its testing period, its great seven years' trial, extending from the death of Wesley nearly to the be ginning of the nineteenth century. At the conclusion of this probation its fidelity was rewarded, as we have seen, by remarkable prosperity, and by the sudden appearance in its ranks of men of extraordinary capacity, who elevated its intellectual character, confirmed its system, and developed its energy in plans for universal missionary conquest. This missionary development may be considered its third and its permanent stage; permanent at least till the evangelization of the world.

The first two of these stages have been sufficiently traced in our pages; and we have so far followed the third as to be now at a standpoint where we can more adequately measure it.

From its beginning Methodism was characterized by a zealous spirit of propagandism. It was essentially missionary. Its introduction into the West Indies, by Gilbert, in 1760, and into Nova Scotia, by Coughlan, in 1765; the appointment of Pilmoor and Boardman to America in 1769, and its commencement at New York at least three years before this date; the formation successively of its Irish, Welsh, and English domestic missions, and the organization of a missionary "institution," at least two years before the first of what are called modern missionary societies,[1] attest its character as an energetic system of evangelization. But in these undertakings it confined its labors almost entirely to the British dominions. Its plans were, in a sense, domestic. The grand idea of foreign, of universal evangelization, could not yet take effect; but it was entertained, for as early as 1786 Coke, who represented in his own person the proper missionary work of the denomination, published the design of "A Mission in Asia."[2] Nearer fields, however, claimed attention first. The West India missions early reached to some of the neighboring dependencies of non-English governments; to

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[1] See vol. i, book vi, chap. 5.

[2] An Address, etc., for the support of missionaries, etc., by Thomas Coke, LL.D., 1786. See Wes. Mag., 1840, p. 573.

St. Eustatius (Dutch) in 1787, St. Bartholomew's (Swedish) in 1798, and later to St. Martin's, Hayti, and other colonies.[3] The long baffled attempts in France of the Norman Methodists of the Channel Islands, were the first really foreign missionary labors of Methodism beyond the Anglo-Saxon race, if we except the island of St. Eustatius; nor indeed need this exception be made, for William Mahy appears in the Conference appointments as early as 1791 for France, whereas a regular missionary could not secure admission to St. Eustatius till about 1804. In 1796 Coke dispatched a small colony of artisans and agriculturists to the country of the Foulahs, Africa, with a liberal outfit, but it included no missionary, and it broke up and entirely failed. In 1804 James M'Mullen was sent as a missionary to Gibraltar, but he was appointed to meet the moral wants of the British troops there, and disasters suspended the mission for some years. In 1811 George Warren, with three fellow-laborers, was dispatched to Sierra Leone; but this was a British colony, and though the mission contemplated plans for the evangelization of the neighboring heathen tribes, its immediate object was to provide for the religious necessities of the settlement.

These gradual developments of missionary energy, grand as some of them are in their historical importance, were but initiatory to that denominational missionary system which arose from Coke's project of an Asiatic mission, to be headed by himself in person. His death, on the Indian Ocean, struck not only a knell through the Church, but a summons for it to rise universally and march around the world. He had long entertained the idea of universal evangelization as the exponent characteristic of the Methodistic movement. The influence of the movement on English Protestantism hitherto, had tended to such a result, for in both England and America nearly all denominations had felt the power of the great revival, not only during the days of Whitefield and Wesley, but even since. Anglo-Saxon Christianity, in both hemispheres, had been quickened into new life, and had experienced a change amounting to a moral revolution. The sublime apostolic idea of evangelization in all the world, and till all the world should be Christianized, had not only been restored as a practical conviction, but had become pervasive and dominant in the consciousness of the Churches, and was manifestly thenceforward to shape the religious history of the Protestant world. The great fermentation of the mind of the civilized nations—the resurrection, as it may be called, of popular thought and power—contemporaneous in the civil and religious worlds, in the former by the American and French Revolutions, in the latter by the Methodistic movement, seemed to presage a new history of the human race. And history is compelled to record, with the frankest admission of the characteristic defects of Thomas Coke, that no man, not excepting Wesley or Whitefield, more completely represented the religious significance of these eventful times.

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[3] Hoole's Year Book of Missions, p. 28. London, 1847.

He was now to perfect a life of great services by becom ing a missionary himself, and by dying in that character.

But before we approach this final scene in his remarkable career we should glance again at the progress of his West India missions, hitherto the chief objects of his missionary zeal, and the chief means of awakening a similar zeal in the denomination. Their history has already been sketched down to the time of Wesley's death.[4] On the first of September, 1792, Coke sailed on his fifth voyage to America, accompanied by Daniel Graham, a missionary to the islands. His forty-sixth birthday occurred while he was on the Atlantic. Successful as had been his course, he could not review it without contrition, for his apostolic enthusiasm knew no limits. "I am now," he writes on the ninth of October, "forty-five years old. Let me take a view of my past life. What is the sum of all? what have I done? and what am I? I have done nothing, no, nothing; and I

[4] See vol. ii, b. v, chap. xi.

am a sinner! God be merciful to me!"[5] He spent about two weeks at the session of the American General Conference, and then departed for the West Indies.[6] St. Eustatius he found still a scene of fierce persecution. No missionary was allowed on the island, and even prayer-meetings were prohibited; but some five or six classes met secretly. He heard that a violent opposition had broken out at St. Vincent's, and that Lumb, the missionary, was in prison. He hastened thither to "comfort his suffering brother." Touching at Roseau, Dominica, whose missionary, M'Cornock, had been dead about three years, he found that a hundred and fifty souls had been awakened by his brief labors, but had been without a pastor during all this interval. He gathered a few of them together, and sang and prayed with them. "The fields," he wrote, "are ripe for the harvest, but alas! alas! there are none to reap it!" On arriving at St. Vincent's he saw Lumb in the common jail, with two malefactors in the same room, and guarded by soldiers; but he had preached through the grated windows to the negroes, who listened with "the tears trickling down their cheeks." The local legislature, determined to break up the mission, had passed a law which virtually restricted preaching to the parish rectors. Its penalties were barbarous: fine or imprisonment for the first offense, corporal punishment and banishment for the second, death for the third. Lumb was an excellent and much respected man; his labors had been surprisingly useful, and about "a thousand slaves were stretching forth their hands unto God" when he was arrested. Coke resolved to apply to the home government for his relief, and passed to other fields.

He rejoiced to find the preachers everywhere resolute and laborious men amid their severe trials, and at Grenada he records with delight that Owens, its missionary the preceding year, had refused an offer from the government of a living worth about £800 (salary and fees) and ordination by the Bishop of London, choosing rather to remain a preacher to the slaves. At St. Kitt's he saw "religion flourishing like an olive-tree in the house of God." At Tortola Owens had brought to an end a "warm persecution;" the island "is very small, yet on this little spot and some other small islands in the neighborhood" there were fourteen hundred negroes in the societies. At Antigua he held a "conference" of the missionaries during five days; he preached before them with much power, and rearranged the appointments, which now amounted to twenty, with twelve missionaries and more than six thousand five hundred members. At St. Vincent's the number had been reduced about five hundred by the persecution.

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[5] Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke's Five Visits to America, p. 160. London, 1793.

[6] Coke's labors in the United States will be narrated in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He passed rapidly from island to island, comforting the societies, encouraging the preachers, and planning for the future. Early in June, 1793, he was again in England appealing to the government against the persecutions at St. Vincent's. The king, in council, annulled the act of the Assembly of that island, and the mission was rescued.

By the Minutes of 1798 we learn that the missionaries to the West Indies had increased to twenty-two. To the number of stations had been added Dominica, St. Bartholomew's, Montego Bay, Providence Island, and Bermuda. During a part of 1799 and 1800 Coke was probably again traveling among the islands,[7] but we have no particulars of his labors there. Their missions were now so thoroughly established as not to need his personal visits, but they had to the last his watchful attention in England. The pestilences in the tropics swept the missionaries rapidly away, but their ranks were continually recruited and increased. Their travels extended from island to island till all the British settlements, and some belonging to other governments, were brought within their plans of labor. Their sufferings and their triumphant deaths, frequently by epidemics, were an impressive testimony for the Gospel. Their converts proved its blessedness not only by reformed lives, but, like their faithful pastors, by deaths which were often sublime.[8] Persecutions broke out at intervals, but they were overcome by either the long suffering patience of the preachers or the intervention of the home government. The influence of the missions on the character of the negroes became quickly manifest. The missionaries were the best police at their stations. In some places where strong military guards had been necessary during the Saturnalian holidays of the slaves, such protections were now unnecessary. The negroes could even be trusted with arms in times of public danger. When the French threatened to invade Tortola, and the white force was insufficient for its defense, the governor sent for Turner, the missionary, to inquire if the blacks could be employed for the purpose. Turner pledged their fidelity. They were accordingly armed, not, however, till the missionary had reluctantly consented to be with them in the field. When the French squadron arrived it was surprised at the unexpected array of forces and, after cutting two vessels out of the bay, prudently retired. The order of the black troops had been perfect, and when they were no longer needed they quietly gave up their arms and returned to their labors. The effect of this example, on the magistrates of other islands, was immediate. The preachers in St. Christopher's and Antigua were called upon, by the governor of the Leeward Islands, to report the number of slaves on their stations who were able to bear arms, and the Methodist negroes were placed in the military force. The home government recognized this novel fact, and Coke received from it a letter tendering passages to missionaries for Bermuda and Jamaica, in the Falmouth packets, "without payment of the king's head money."

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[7] Drew's Coke, chap. xiv; Etheridge's Coke, chap. xxi.

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[8] Coke deems it not unbefitting his "History of the West Indies" to refer to these "happy deaths" as "displaying the efficacy of divine grace in a most powerful manner." He records, vol. ii, p. 289, an extraordinary case of a negro convert, whose "sufferings, it is supposed, primarily arose from a drop of boiling sugar falling upon his arm when he was at work. The place soon fretted to a sore, and the wound so spread that at length his fingers actually fell off. The disorder then ascended to his head, which became affected so much that his eyes dropped out; and this was soon followed by several pieces of his skull. His feet also were attacked by the same irremediable complaint, and both came off. Yet he bore all this with remarkable patience, and rejoiced in hope of being received into that place where neither sorrow, nor affliction, nor death can enter. 'The last time,' says Mr. Taylor, the missionary, 'I visited him, I could not bear to look upon him, but talked to and prayed with him at his chamber door. When I asked him how he did, he replied that he was just waiting the Lord's time, when he should be pleased to call for him. 'Massa,' he said, 'two hands gone, two eyes gone, two feet gone; no more dis carcass here! O massa, de pain sometimes too strong for me; I am obliged to cry out, and pray to de Lord for assistance!' When his life closed, he exhorted all about him to be sure to live to God, and especially his wife, who had continued with him all the time of his affliction. This is a rare circumstance among negroes. The common practice is, for either men or women, when their partners are afflicted, to consider all obligations canceled; to leave them, and get other husbands or wives. But she continued faithful; and he died happy, exhorting her to live to God."

But such obvious advantages of the missions, however acknowledged in the hour of necessity, could not subdue the inherent hostility of the human heart to the spiritual demands and victories of Christianity. Hardly had Stephenson, one of the preachers thus sent out under the favor of the government, begun his work with success, when the local authorities began to persecute him. In 1800 a law was passed by the Legislature of Jamaica, interdicting all public preaching on the islands, except by ministers of the Churches of England and Scotland. The missionary could not desert his flock. He was cast into prison. Coke applied to the home government; the law was disallowed by the king in council, and Stephenson was released, but was so prostrated by his confinement that he never recovered his health. In 1807 Jamaica enacted a similar law, forbidding any "Methodist missionary or other sectary to instruct slaves, or to receive them into their houses, chapels, or conventicles of any sort." Coke and the Committee of Privileges again appealed to the home government, and the oppressive statute was canceled, but not till the slaves had been eighteen months deprived of the services of their missionaries. This colony was the center of legislative persecutions at intervals for a number of years, but toward the end of 1815 the chief chapels, some of which had been shut about ten years, were again allowed to be used. Shipman, a missionary who had been more than a year on the island without permission to preach, now began his labors with great success. "The people," he wrote,[9] "with joy sparkling in their eyes, and feelings of gratitude visibly portrayed on their countenances, came up once more to the house of the Lord. But certain I am, that few of our friends in England can have any conception of the joy this merciful and happy event diffused, because none have been prevented by law from worshiping God for eight or ten years." Under these frequent interruptions the missions suffered serious losses at times, but no sooner were they resumed in any place than surprising success again attended them. The Conference of 1815 reported nearly twenty thousand communicants in all its missions; they had increased since 1810 more than six thousand and three hundred; above six thousand of these gains were in the West Indies. The missionaries now extended their labors over the archipelago. Their moral triumphs in elevating the really heathen condition of the negroes were marvelous. Jamaica, which had in 1800 but twenty churches, with four hundred thousand population, and an average of one clergyman for each district of five hundred and sixty square miles, was now largely supplied with the ministrations of religion by the laborious itinerants,[10] and the religious improvement of the negroes, whom a reverend historian had declared hopelessly incapable of Christianization,[11] was one of the most remarkable examples of the power of the Gospel in the history of Christianity. The holiday festivities of the island had presented scenes of enormity which cannot be described. The negroes, except so far as the restraints of the law held them in check, had hardly differed from the savages of Africa; in some respects they had, by contact with the whites, really sunk lower than their original condition. Now thousands of them maintained an unimpeachable Christian character; their African superstitions, their polygamy and other vices, untouched by the laws, were voluntarily abandoned, and as early as 1818 a missionary wrote: "During the last Christmas there was not a drum heard, nor any of the old heathenish sports carried on; but all spent the holidays in a rational manner, in the worship of God. It is also worthy of observation, that, instead of singing their old negro songs in the field, the slaves now sing our hymns."

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[9] Smith, II, 5, 6.

[10] Jamaica, Enslaved and Free. Edited by G. Peck, D.D. New York, 1846.

[11] Rev. Mr. Hughes. "To bring them to the knowledge of the Christian religion is, undoubtedly, a great and good design; in the intention laudable, and in speculation easy; yet I believe, for reasons too tedious to mention, that the difficulties attending it are, and I am persuaded ever will be, insurmountable."

Meanwhile the missions continued to extend. Their stations on the islands rapidly multiplied. They were organized on the Swedish island of St. Bartholomew's in 1798, in Bermuda the same year, in Anguilla in 1815, in Tobago in 1816, in Hayti in 1817, in St. Martin's (French and Dutch) in 1818, in Turk's Island in 1821. On nearly all these islands they had to fight their way through stormy persecutions. Mobs raged, the chapels were attacked, and the missionaries imprisoned. As early as 1814 they reached the mainland of South America, and began their work at Demarara, British Guiana, where two laymen, William Claxton and William Powell, had formed the first Methodist class of the South American continent in 1811. They were persecuted by the civil authorities and had to hold their meetings secretly at night, but increased to seventy members before Talboys, the first missionary, arrived.[12] In about a year after his arrival he erected a commodious church, and the seventy members had increased to nearly three hundred and seventy. But in 1816 persecutions, which seemed to be the universal test of Methodism, broke out furiously in Demarara. "The whole colony was in a blaze," the chapel was attacked at night, its doors broken in, and its benches torn up and thrown into the street. Claxton and his brethren rallied and defended it. Peace returned, and in a short time afterward Richard Watson, vindicating in a pamphlet the abused missionary, could say, that "if the anti-mission party should be elated by the intelligence of this riot, their feelings will probably be moderated by the statement, that the mission there was never in circumstances so prosperous; that the society has within a year increased more than a third, and now amounts to seven hundred; and that the increase of hearers has demanded an enlargement of the chapel by the erection of a gallery. Thus does God 'make the wrath of man to praise him.'"[13]

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[12] Memorials of Missionary Labors in Africa and the West Indies, by William Moister, p. 171. New York, 1851.

The great success of the missions, together with the amelioration of the laws which had been enacted against them, drew the attention of the Christian world to the West Indies, especially to Jamaica, and in 1824 there were in this one colony no less than four Moravian, five Baptist, and eight Wesleyan missionaries. About the same time the national Church, which had so long neglected the field, made special provisions for it, and a bishop was appointed who called attention to the slave population, and placed missionaries and catechists among them. Speaking of this period and its results, a local authority says: "The tide of knowledge and religion began to flow; and utterly in vain was every attempt to impede its onward progress. A new era had dawned upon Jamaica, and a change was gradually taking place, which, in the short space of about twenty years, produced results probably unprecedented in any age or country. It recalls to our remembrance the events of apostolic times, when superstition burned her books on the altar of truth, when the idols of the heathen fell, and the throne of Satan trembled. Instead of the public carnivals, and the riots and obscene processions in the streets, once so common on the Sabbath, that sacred day may now be said to be generally hallowed. The Sunday markets are universally abolished, and the appropriate duties of the Sabbath are more extensively and properly observed than even in England. From earliest dawn, thousands, both young and old, clothed in clean and neat apparel, are seen thronging the streets and roads to and from the house of God and the Sabbath-schools. Such a scene would be delightful under any circumstances, but the more so from the perfect contrast it presents to those so lately witnessed. The whole population, both of the town and suburbs, seems to be in motion, and, when going in one direction, resembles a torrent carrying everything before it; those who are married exhibiting the civilized sight of walking arm in arm; a fact, the narration of which, though in England it may excite a smile, is here noticed on account of its comparative novelty among a people who were lately sunk in the lowest depths of degradation. Such a transformation in the manners and appearance of the people could, a few years ago, scarcely have been imagined by any one acquainted with the then existing society. The number of places of worship is greatly multiplied, and the whole number at which the Gospel is, occasionally or more regularly, preached by ministers of various denominations, cannot, on the lowest calculation, be estimated at less than three hundred. Not only has religion found its way into almost every town and village of importance in the island, but in a greater or less degree into the majority of the estates and other large properties. As soon as its sacred influence begins to be felt on a plantation, or in a new township, the first work of the converts is, to add to their cluster of cottages a house for God. There they are heard often before the dawn of day, and at the latest hour preceding their repose, pouring out their earnest and artless supplications at the throne of grace for strength to enable them to maintain their Christian course."

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[13] In 1850 there were in Demarara thirteen Methodist chapels, fourteen day schools, two thousand six hundred and sixty members of society, and more than eight thousand hearers. Moister, p. 187.

In fine, the West India Missons had reproduced the moral miracles of apostolic Christianity, and had put to silence the cavils of skepticism respecting the power of the Gospel to renovate a people antecedently to the slower processes of civilization, for before the appearance of the missionaries in this archipelago, these processes had hardly affected the negro population, except so far as to make them available for labor, about as, in civilized lands, they affect the use of beasts of burden.

It would be impossible within our necessary limits to describe the salutary operations of Methodism among these islands generally. Jamaica has been referred to chiefly as an example of both the trials and the triumphs that were common to nearly all to which the missionaries had access.

Of course these improvements could not fail to lead to other ameliorations. The Christian public of England became resolute to revolutionize the civil condition of the Christianized negroes. In 1807 it had abolished the slave-trade. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton introduced into Parliament, in 1823, a resolution for the gradual abolition of slavery. Canning, Brougham, and other statesmen advocated the measure. Already Methodists (Arminian, Calvinistic, "Low Church,") had been active in the British Senate in behalf of the missions, and Thornton, Butterworth, and Thompson of Hull, had vindicated them there against the oppressions of the colonial legislatures. These men, and the religious community generally, sustained, with enthusiastic energy, the project of Buxton. The ministerial leaders of Methodism, Bunting, Watson, Clarke, Newton, all advocated it, but with a circumspection befitting their ecclesiastical position. While, as a domestic religious body, and as citizens of England, the Methodists used their rights of discussion and petition for it, their missionaries were strictly guarded against any interference with the laws of the colonies. By an act of the Conference as early as 1807, they were not allowed to hold slaves themselves by inheritance, marriage, or otherwise, but the possession of slaves by white members of the societies was not prohibited, and most of their white class-leaders were slaveholders. The Conference had rebuked a meeting of missionaries which had hastily passed resolutions deemed too favorable to the institution. They were, in fine, required by their official instructions to "promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves without in the least degree, in public or in private, interfering with their civil condition."[14] An ardent friend of the parlimentary measure, himself twenty years a Wesleyan missionary, and some years in the West Indies, writes with gratulation of the prudence of his single-minded brethren in their critical circumstances. He says that "for half a century from the commencement of Methodism the slaves never expected freedom, and the missionaries never taught them to expect it; and when the agitations of later years unavoidably affected them more or less, as they learned, chiefly through the violent speeches of their own masters or overseers, what was going on in their favor in England, it was missionary influence that moderated their passions, kept them in the steady course of duty, and prevented them from sinning against God by offending against the laws of man. Whatever outbreaks or insurrections at any time occurred, *no Methodist slave was ever proved guilty of incendiarism or rebellion, for more than seventy years, namely, from* 1760 *to* 1834. An extensive examination of their correspondence throughout that length ened period, and an acquaintance with their general character and history, enables me confidently to affirm that a more humble, laborious, zealous, and unoffending class of Christian missionaries were never employed by any section of the Church of God, than those sent out by the British Conference to the West India isles. They were eminently men of one business, unconnected with any political party, though often strongly suspected by the jealousies so rife in slaveholding communities. A curious instance of this jealousy occurred in regard to one who was firmly believed to be a correspondent of the Antislavery Society in England. 'I did not know,' said Fowell Buxton, in the House of Commons, 'that such a man was in existence, till I heard that he was to be hung for corresponding with me.'"[15]

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[14] Watson wrote their instructions: "As in the colonies in which you are called to labor a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, the Committee most strongly call to your recollection what was so fully stated to you when you were accepted as a missionary to the West Indies, that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition. On all persons, in the state of slaves, you are diligently and implicitly to enforce the same exhortations which the apostles of our Lord administered to the slaves of ancient nations, when by their ministry they embraced Christianity. Ephesians vi, 5–8; Col. iii, 22–25."

But, with all their prudence and visible usefulness, and the defensive writings of Watson, they could not escape persecution. Chapels were still demolished by the mob, preachers were tarred and feathered, and attempts were made to set them on fire while suffering this indignity. These barbarities excited still more the people of England, especially the Methodists: the Conference passed from year to year more decided resolutions; petitions poured into Parliament demanding emancipation; out of three hundred and fifty-two thousand four hundred and four signatures to these memorials, from among Dissenters, two hundred and twenty-nine thousand four hundred and twenty-six were the names of Methodists. On the 14th of May, 1833, Lord Stanley, secretary for the colonies, introduced into Parliament a motion that from the first day of August, 1834, "slavery shall be forever abolished throughout the British Colonies." A hundred millions of dollars were paid by the British people to the slaveowners, and the great measure was consummated.

The memorable night of the 31st of July, 1834, presented a scene, in these colonies, which could not fail to command the admiration of the slaveholders themselves, however doubtful they might deem the expediency of emancipation and its prospective results; a scene which no historian can attempt to picture, but which cannot be passed without allusion. It was "Emancipation eve." The negroes labored faithfully at their tasks on the plantations till the usual hour of rest. About ten o'clock at night their masters allowed them, not without apprehensions, to resort to their chapels. "Now," writes a missionary, "was seen the wide extent of missionary influence, and its conservative power while it was still the foster-father of liberty; for though all the slaves were not converted, the Christian portion guided the movements of the whole, and brought all to the house of prayer. It was 'a night much to be remembered,' not by a destroying angel's visit, for it was the Lord's night of mercy, and in every island 'praise waited for God in Zion.'"[16] A few minutes before midnight the innumerable assemblies knelt in silent prayer. At last the clocks struck the hour of twelve over the bowed hosts, and eight hundred thousand slaves rose up freemen, while to the midnight heavens rolled, from all the British Antilles, the doxology, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." "Such strains," truthfully says the missionary, "for such an event, had never before been heard since the foundations of the earth were laid."

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[15] Rev. William J. Shrewsbury in the Am. Meth. Quart. Rev., January 1858, p. 46. The italics are his own.

In the year of Wesley's death (1791) there were, in the Methodist West India Missions, 12 missionaries and 5,645 communicants. When Coke died (1814) they reported 31 missionaries and 17,000 communicants. In 1839, the centenary year of Methodism, which closes our narrative, they comprised 83 missionaries and 42,928 communicants.[17]

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[16] Shrewsbury, Meth. Quar. Rev., April, 1858, p. 207.

[17] In 1850 a missionary writes: "The Wesleyan Mission in the West Indies has assumed a magnitude that must astonish all who calmly consider it. There are now 5 districts, 55 circuits, 187 chapels, 186 minor preaching places, 86 missionaries and assistant missionaries, 181 local preachers, 7 catechists, 143 day-school teachers, 1,464 Sunday-school teachers, 52,086 church members, 1,290 on trial, 107,267 hearers, 18,359 scholars in the schools: and, besides contributing largely toward the support of the Gospel among themselves, in building churches and supporting their own pastors, for

Having devoted his chief attention to this great mission till it no longer needed his personal care, and having seen American Methodism secure under its episcopal polity, and the English Connection settled and prosperous after its protracted trial; having successively started the Irish, Welsh, and English home missions, and, by his almost ubiquitous travels, seen the denomination generally imbued with the missionary spirit, and able men raised up to conduct its new development, it was fitting that Coke should complete his extraordinary life by a final and crowning act of missionary devotion. In his old age he presented himself before the Conference of 1813, pleading even with tears to be sent himself as a missionary to Asia.

The British sway in India had opened a new southern world for the enterprise of war, commerce, and Christianity. When the British East India Company was yet only a trading corporation, Robert Clive, one of its young clerks, threw aside his pen, and seizing the sword, won the magnificent Asiatic power of England. Without rank, without military education, he placed himself at the head of a small force, into which he infused his own invincible courage and energy. When but twenty-five years old, he led two hundred English and three hundred Sepoy troops, not one of the officers of which had ever seen an action, through frightful impediments to Arcot, and took its fortifications. For fifty days he stood a siege, and at last triumphed, achieving feats of courage, and still greater examples of fortitude, which proved that the young military book-keeper was one of those great men of history whom God

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many years the members have assisted the General Mission Fund, for the diffusion of the Gospel in other parts of the world: last year the sum they thus contributed amounted to near £3,000, though suffering to a lamentable extent in temporal matters."—Samuel's Wes. Meth. Missions in Jamaica and Honduras Delineated, etc., p. 14. London, 1850. In addition to this important work, see Coke's History of the West Indies, 3 vols., Liverpool, 1808; Duncan's Narrative of the Wesleyan Missions to Jamaica, etc., London, 1849; Jamaica Enslaved and Free, New York, 1846; and Moister's Memorials of Missionary Labors, etc New York, 1851.

sends to change the destiny of empires. The French and the native powers entered the field to arrest this new fate of the East. The night of the 22d of June, 1757, was the eve of its greatest crisis. Before Clive lay the enemy, with forty thousand infantry, fifteen thousand cavalry, and more than fifty pieces of ordnance of the largest size. He had but three thousand troops with which to confront these tremendous odds. His high spirit quailed for a moment, but his British resolution rose sternly to the height of the exigency. He spent an hour meditating alone in the forest over the extraordinary prospect before him. He ordered his troops forward; they crossed a river, and the little army seemed within the grasp of the opposing host. On the next morning, the 23d of June, 1757, the day of a new destiny dawned upon India: its fate was decided on the field of Plassey. One hour sufficed for the dispersion of the enemy. By his three thousand men, and with the loss of but twenty-two slain and fifty wounded, the young clerk scattered to the winds an army of almost sixty thousand, and founded the British domination in Asia, subduing a power larger than his whole country, and giving to England a new empire which, in our day, comprises an area of nearly one and a half million square miles of territory, and nearly two hundred millions of people.

Toward this immense field the spirit of Coke, as great in its zeal for the kingdom of Christ as was that of Clive for the power of England, turned incessantly for some years before he dared to surprise his brethren with his plans. As early as 1784 he was in correspondence with a resident of Bengal respecting it.[18] He kept it steadily in view, looking impatiently for the opportune hour. The India government was opposed to any plans for the evangelization of the Hindoos. The financial resources of the Wesleyan body did not seem to justify the undertaking. What could he do? He heard that the British government thought of appointing a bishop to India, and he ventured to offer himself for the proposed see, as a means of beginning his missionary schemes. He addressed a letter to Wilberforce on the subject, declaring his willingness to sacrifice all his relations with the Methodist Church for the great design. "I am not," he wrote, "so much wanted in our Connection at home as I was. Our Committee of Privileges, as we term it, can watch over the interests of the body, in respect to laws and government, as well in my absence as if I were with them. Our Missionary Committee in London can do the same in respect to missions, and my absence would only make them feel their duty more incumbent upon them. Auxiliary committees through the nation (which we have now in contemplation) will amply supply my place in respect to raising money. There is nothing to influence me much against going to India but my extensive sphere for preaching the Gospel. But this, I do assure you, sir, sinks considerably in my calculation, in comparison with the high honor (if the Lord were to confer it upon me in his providence and grace) of beginning or reviving a genuine work of religion in the immense regions of Asia." He had been informed, on the authority of Wilberforce, that Parliament was "set against granting any countenance to Dissenters or Methodists in favor of sending missionaries to India." Hence, rather than fail in his purpose, he was willing to act in his character as a minister of the Establishment. He further remarks to Wilberforce: "India cleaves to my heart. I sincerely believe that my strong inclination to spend the remainder of my life there originates in the divine will, while I am called upon to use the secondary means to obtain the end."

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[18] See the Methodist Magazine for 1792.

The letter was imprudent and characteristic; for, like most great men, Coke had his weaknesses; but his life and character forbid any ungenerous interpretation of the correspondence. The fact that it was written to the pure-minded Wilberforce is proof of its pure intention. Coke was already wielding an episcopal power compared with which the Indian see would be insignificant except so far as it could facilitate his missionary designs. He wished not salary, for he was independent. "I am not conscious," he continues, "that the least ambition influences me in this business. I possess a fortune of about £1,200 a year, which is sufficient to bear my traveling expenses and to enable me to make many donations."[19]

Of course the proposition failed. But Coke's energy could not fail. Ceylon, "the threshold before the gate of the East," was not under the restrictive control of the East India Company. Its Chief Justice, Sir Alexander Johnstone, had expressed a wish for Wesleyan missionaries, and the Portuguese language could be available there. Coke was determined to go in spite of every obstacle. His friend, Samuel Drew, wrote to him, remonstrating against the design on account of his age and the need of his services a home. He replied: "I am now dead to Europe, and alive for India. God himself has said to me, Go to Ceylon! I would rather be set naked on its coast, and without a friend than not to go. I am learning the Portuguese language continually." This was enthusiasm, doubtless, but it was the enthusiasm which makes heroes and apostles, and which suffered on the cross for us men and our redemption.

Coke was in Ireland when he wrote this letter to Drew. Irishmen had been among the best evangelists of Methodism; their fervor, their buoyant temper in the endurance of all kinds of hardships, and their never-failing courage, had been signalized in most of its fields. They had founded Method ism in the United States of America, they had given the first Wesleyan missionary to Gibraltar, the first to the North American British Provinces, and one of the first little band which was cast with Coke, by the storms of the Atlantic, upon the West India Islands. They had reinforced the missions of those islands frequently with such men as M'Cornock, Werril, Daniel Graham, Sturgeon, and Murdock.[20] Coke had found Irish converts, as settlers or soldiers, in many of the islands, and by them had organized many new societies. Irish Methodists had even written from Bengal for Wesleyan missionaries; they seemed to beckon him to the great Oriental field for which he was planning. He now applied to the Irish Conference for the first official approval of his Asiatic project. It voted for him with enthusiasm; and, hard pressed as it was, by its own necessities, and looking upon him, as it had for years, with almost idolatrous affection as its own chief apostle, it not only sanctioned his plan, but voted him several of its preachers as missionaries. One of them, John M'Kenny, a native of Coleraine, was to be left at the Cape of Good Hope, the first Methodist preacher of South Africa. Gideon Ouseley, the missionary champion of Irish Methodism, as we shall hereafter see, stood forth on the Conference floor and begged, with tears, to be permitted to accompany them, but his services could not be dispensed with at home.[21]

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[19] And yet the son of Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, (Correspondence of Wilberforce, vol. ii, p. 256,) has invidiously given this letter to the world, and Dr. Pusey has used it in impeachment of the character of Coke. (Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, etc., third edition.) Jackson has ably answered the charge. (Letter to Rev. Ed. B. Pusey D.D., p. 43. London, 1842.) The whole case is highly creditable to the heart, however it may detract from the head of Coke. The first Protestant bishop of the New World, turning "the world upside down" by his apostolic energy, cannot suffer seriously by any reflection from either the bishop or the anchorite of Oxford. If any of my readers think Coke needs farther vindication, I must refer them to Jackson's pamphlet, and to Etheridge's emoir, p. 370.

Thus sustained, Coke presented himself before the British Conference in 1813 with his scheme and his Irish missionaries. The Conference was astonished; but what important event of his life could fail to astonish them? "Many rose to oppose" it. Benson, "with vehemence," said it would "ruin Methodism,"[22] for the failure of so gigantic a project would seem to involve the honor of the denomination before all the world. The debate was adjourned to the next day. Coke, leaning on the arm of one of his missionaries, returned to his lodgings in deep anguish, the tears flowing down his face in the streets. He was not at the ante-breakfast session the next day. The missionary hastened to his chamber, and found that he had not been in bed; his disheveled silvery locks showed that he had passed the night in deep distress. He had spent the hours in prayer, prostrate on the floor. They went to the Conference, and Coke made a thrilling speech. He not only offered to lay himself on the altar of this great sacrifice, but, if the Conference could not meet the financial expense of the mission, he offered to lay down thirty thousand dollars toward it. Reece, Atmore, and Bunting had already stood up for him, and Thomas Roberts made for him a "moving appeal." The Conference could not resist longer without denying its old faith in the providence of God. It voted him authority to go and take with him seven men, including the one for Southern Africa. Coke immediately called out from the session Clough, the missionary who had sympathized with him in his defeat the day before, and walking down the street, not now with tears, but "with joy beaming in his eye, and with a full heart," exclaimed, "Did I not tell you that God would answer prayer?"

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[20] See the list, down to 1824, in Smith's History of Methodism in Ireland, p. 167. Dublin, 1830.

[21] Coke had to suffer not a little from the usual jealousies of human nature, in both the English and American Conferences. His large spirit transcended and startled most men; but Ireland never failed him. Wesley himself has, to this day, hardly more of her affection and admiration. Coke was the favorite president of her Conference for many years; and while the English Conference often looked askance at the wonderful little man, the Irish Conference continually sent over enthusiastic testimonies of their admiration for him. Its Addresses to the British Conference are inspiring examples of Irish heartiness.

Preparations were forthwith begun for this memorable expedition. James Lynch, John M'Kenny, William Ault, George Erskine, William M. Harvard, Thomas H. Squance, Benjamin Clough, and the wives of Harvard and Ault, composed, with Coke, the little company. Well furnished with provisions for their work, including a printing-press and type, they assembled at Portsmouth to depart on their long voyage. As they stood around their grayheaded leader, he rose from his chair, and with uplifted hands exclaimed: Here we all are before God, embarked in the most important and glorious work in the world. Glory be ascribed to his blessed name, that he has given you to be my companions and assistants in carrying the Gospel to Asia, and that he has not suffered parents, nor brothers, nor sisters, nor the dearest friends, to stop any of you from going with me!" At this time, says one of the missionaries, he seemed as if he had not a dormant faculty; every power of his soul was alive to his grand design. He preached his last sermon, in England, at Portsmouth. "It is of little consequence," he said in it, "whether we take our flight to glory from the land of our nativity, from the trackless ocean, or the shores of Ceylon!" They were ominous but exultant words. The last sentence of the sermon was equally so: "God will give us our part in the first resurrection, that on us the second death may have no power!"

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[22] MS. of Clough, one of the missionaries who was present, cited by Smith, History of Wesleyan Methodism, II, 5, 6.

On the 30th of December, 1813, they departed in a fleet of six Indiamen and more than twenty other merchant vessels, convoyed by three ships of war. Coke and two of the missionaries were on board of one of the Indiamen, and the rest of the party on board of another. All were treated with marked respect by the officers and the hundreds of troops and other passengers who crowded the vessels. In about a week a terrific gale overtook them in the Bay of Biscay, and a ship full of people, in which Coke had at first designed to embark, was lost. On the tenth of February one of the Indiamen hoisted her flag at half mast; all the fleet responded to the sad signal: the wife of Ault was dead, and that evening was buried in the sea. She died "triumphant in the faith."

Severe gales still swept over them, especially at the Cape of Good Hope. Several sailors were lost overboard, and the missionaries suffered much in their health. The fleet did not touch at the Cape, but M'Kenny was borne thither by one of the ships. In the Indian Ocean Coke's health rapidly declined. On the morning of the third of May his servant knocked at his cabin door to awake him at his usual time of half past five o'clock. He heard no response. Opening the door he beheld the lifeless body of the missionary extended on the floor. A "placid smile was on his countenance." He was cold and stiff, and must have died before midnight. It is supposed that he had risen to call for help, and fell by apoplexy. His cabin was separated by only a thin wainscot from others, in which no noise or struggle had been heard, and it is inferred that he died without violent suffering. Consternation spread among the missionary band, but they lost not their resolution. They prepared to commit him to the deep, and to prosecute, as they might be able, his great design. A coffin was made, and at five o'clock in the afternoon the corpse was solemnly borne up to the leeward gangway, where it was covered with signal flags; the soldiers were drawn up in rank on the deck; the bell of the ship tolled, and the crew and passengers, deeply affected, crowded around the scene. One of the missionaries read the burial service, and the moment that the sun sunk below the Indian Ocean the coffin was cast into its depths.

He died in his sixty-seventh year. Though the great leader was no more, his spirit remained; and, as we shall hereafter see, the East Indian Missions of Methodism, "presenting in our day a state of massive strength and inexpressible utility," sprang from this fatal voyage. But the most important result of this expedition was the impulse which was given to the missionary movement at home by the death of Coke, and the organized form which the enterprise soon after assumed throughout the Connection. Coke's personal superintendence of the missions had seemed hitherto to render unnecessary any such organization, especially as the circuit collections had been some time regularly and generally taken up by the preachers; but he himself had, prior to his voyage, proposed the formation of missionary societies throughout the Church. The last Irish

Conference he attended, which began in Dublin, July 3, 1813, had the honor, if not of making the first public suggestion, at least of taking the first public action on the subject. It ordained that auxiliary societies should be established throughout Ireland to raise annual subscriptions for "our missions throughout the globe." "We have made an offering," it added, "of four preachers for the important work, and our President has undertaken to go himself to Ceylon with the missionaries who shall be appointed by the two Conferences."[26] Before Coke's departure to the East, a friend of William Dawson suggested to him, at Leeds, that the cause "must be taken out of the Doctor's hands, that it must be made public—a common cause."[27] George Morley, superintendent of the Leeds district, expressed the same opinion; his colleagues, Bunting and Pilter, favored it; they consulted Naylor and Everett, of the adjacent Bromley circuit, and the design was adopted. Watson and Buckley, on Wakefield circuit, quickly entered into it, and were followed by Reece and Atmore, of the Bradford and Halifax circuits. Bunting formed the first plan, Buckley preached the first sermon in its behalf, at Armley, and the first public meeting for its organization was held in the Old Chapel at Leeds, on the afternoon of the 6th of October, 1813. Thomas Thompson, M. P. of Hull, presided. Watson preached in the morning, in the Albion-street Chapel, an introductory missionary sermon of remarkable power, on the text, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." Its immediate publication helped to extend the new measure in much of the Connection. The afternoon meeting for speeches was commenced with some hesitation, for it was a novelty among Methodists, and was opposed by many; but Bunting opened the way skillfully. Thompson, on taking the chair, made a brief address. No less than sixteen resolutions were moved and discussed by James Wood, Warrener, (a missionary of the West Indies,) Atmore, Morley, Scarth, Braithwaite, John Wood, Dawson, (thenceforward to be a leader on such occasions,) Vasey, Buckley, and Bunting.[28] Watson, by order of the meeting, issued an eloquent "Ad dress to the Public," showing that besides forty home missionaries in England and Wales, the denomination had about sixty in Ireland and foreign lands, and urging immediate efforts for their reinforcement. In less than a year the Leeds district proved the advantage of its new measures by sending to the treasury £1,000. Immediately similar meetings began to be held in other parts of the Church. "A new era," says a historian of Methodism, "was thus inaugurated, a prelude of such progress in the civilization and religion of mankind, at no very distant day, as perhaps the world had never seen before, certainly never since the apostolic age."

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[26] Minutes of the Irish Conference, cited in Smith's Consecutive History, etc., of Methodism in Ireland, p. 100. Dublin, 1830.

[27] Everett's Village Blacksmith, chap. 6. The question, where and by whom the first suggestion of a Methodist missionary society was made, appears to have become interesting to English Methodists since the Wesleyan missions have assumed their late importance. I can find no reason to change my statement of the hitherto unrecognized claim of the Irish Conference in the case. The suggestion was made by Coke; but its first public recognition was made by the Irish Conference three months before its adoption at Leeds. The Leeds meeting may, however, have been the first of the kind held in the Connection. Lanktree, after leaving the Irish Conference, says: "After clearing the suburbs, we were overtaken by the chaise; while it was driving past us, the Doctor put out his head from the window and pronounced his last farewell, adding, with great earnestness, 'Brother Lanktree, remember the missions! form missionary societies!' These were his last words to me: I doubt not but the impression they left on my heart will be lasting as my sojournment upon this earth, and interwoven with all my exertions to extend the Redeemer's kingdom." Biog. Nar., p. 230. Belfast, 1836.

The missionary cause was no longer to be a casual or secondary interest of Methodism. It was to be the characteristic fact of the denomination; its every Church was to become virtually a missionary society; its eminent men, Bunting, Watson, Clarke, Newton, and their compeers, its humbler but popular men like Dawson, Hick, and Saville, laboring as heretofore for its local prosperity, were nevertheless to become representatives of the spirit of universal propagandism, which had been kindling and extending until it now broke forth, like an unquenchable flame, and glowed around all the Methodist altars. It was now, in fine, to assume with new distinctness its last historical phase, and present an organic exemplification of what has been stated, in the introduction of this history, to be its legitimate, its essential character, "a revival Church in its spirit, a missionary Church in its organization."

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[28] Their speeches were published in "A Report of the Principal Speeches delivered at the Formation of the Methodist Missionary Society for the Leeds District, October 6, 1813. By James Nichols, London." It passed through several editions, and is a monumental document of Methodism.

The successive measures of the Conference tending to this result and following it—the appointment of missionary committees of preachers and laymen, of stated missionary collections in the churches, of resident secretaries at London, of deputations to missionary meetings in various parts of the kingdom, and the founding of a mission-house in the metropolis—have been traced in the preceding pages. These measures culminated in 1818 in the formation of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society, to be coextensive with the Connection, and to consolidate its whole missionary interest. The district organizations were to be called Auxiliary Societies; those of circuits and towns Branch Societies, and Ladies' Branch Societies and Juvenile Branch Associations were to be formed. Monthly missionary prayer-meetings were to be held "in every chapel of the Connection," a measure which was ordained by the Conference as early as 1815. A large board of managers was appointed, among the laymen of which were Joseph Bulmer, Thomas Farmer, Thomas Marriott, Richard Smith, and other influential Methodists. Thomas Thompson, of Hull, and George Marsden, were the general treasurers. Jabez Bunting, Joseph Taylor, and Richard Watson, were the secretaries.[29]

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[29] See the "Plan" or Constiution as proposed in the Minutes of 1817, and, as amended, in the Minutes of 1818 and the annual reports of the

The news of Coke's death reached England at the right time to stimulate the measures begun in 1813. Their necessity was now more than ever apparent, and they rapidly advanced till, in about four years after his fall, the mighty structure of the Wesleyan Missionary Society rose in its complete proportions, an organization which was destined to exceed by our day all kindred Protestant institutions in success abroad, and to be exceeded only by that of the national Church in its financial results at home.

As the plan for a general society had been recommended by the Conference of 1817, Watson prepared it in detail for the approval of the Conference of 1818. The approval of the Conference was anticipated, and "the first meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society" was held at City Road Chapel, the most appropriate place, on the 4th of May, 1818.[30] Thomas Thompson presided. The interest of the occasion was greatly enhanced by the arrival of Sir Alexander Johnstone, chief judge of Ceylon, with two Buddhist priests who had renounced paganism, and

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society. The personal appointments, given above, were made by the Conference of 1818. I find varying statements among Methodist authorities respecting the epoch of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. Hoole, one of its secretaries, say it was "organized in 1816." (Year Book of Missions, p. 26.) Smith says 1817, (Hist. of Wes. Meth., vol. ii, p. 632.) Jackson (Life of Watson, p. 165,) says "the Conference, [of 1817,] therefore, directed the committee to arrange a plan for the formation of a 'General Wesleyan Missionary Society,' which should hold its anniversary in London about the month of May, and to which all the district societies should be considered auxiliaries. The plan thus formed was to be laid before the Conference of 1818 for its approval." These discrepancies arise from the gradual stages of its formation. The Conference "approved" and published the "Plan" in its Minutes of 1817, directing the "Executive Committee to make such additional arrangements as may be necessary for perfecting it, and carrying it into full effect." In the Conference of 1818 it was reported with amendments, and the resolution passed that "it *be now adopted.*" The italics are in the Minutes. This should seem to determine the date. Townley, one of the secretaries, adopts it, (Wes. Mag., 1834, p. 670,) and it will be seen in the text that the first public meeting was held in this year.

[30] Jackson's Life of Watson, chap. 11, says "4th of April." The Wes. Mag., for the year, reports the meeting, and gives it the date of "4th of May."

who were placed, as we have seen, under the tuition of Adam Clarke.

Such were some of the most important results, thus far, of the life of Thomas Coke, or at least of tendencies in the Methodistic movement which he more than any other man represented. There is essential greatness in the character of this man. He had, doubtless, characteristic weaknesses also, and they have been frankly admitted in these pages. There have been few great men without them; the faults of such men become the more noticeable, either by contrast with or by partaking of their greatness; and the vanity of ordinary human nature is eagerly disposed, in self-gratulation, to criticise as peculiar defects of superior men, infirmities that are common to all. Coke's attempt with Bishop White to unite the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal Churches, his proposal to the Bishop of London to recognize and ordain the Wesleyan ministry, his project at Litchfield for an episcopal organization of British Methodism, and his offer of himself to Wilberforce for a see in India, have been regarded as blunders, if not worse than blunders; but had they been adopted, they might have appeared quite otherwise. Unquestionably they betray a want of that keen sagacity which passes for prudence, though it is oftener guile. It is equally unquestionable, that they do not admit of an unfavorable moral interpretation. There was a vein of simplicity running through his whole nature, such as sometimes marks the highest genius. He was profound in nothing except his religious sentiments. A certain capaciousness of soul, really vast, belonged to him, but it never took the character of philosophic generalization. It is impossible to appreciate such a man without taking into the estimate the element of Christian faith: the Christian religion being true, he was among the most rational of men; that being false, he was, like Paul and all genuine Christians, "of all men the most miserable" and the most irrational. Practical energy was his chief intellectual trait; and if it was sometimes effervescent, it was never evanescent. He had a leading agency in the greatest facts of Methodism, and it was impossible that the series of momentous deeds which mark his career, could have been the result of mere accident or fortune. They must have been legitimate to the man. Neither Whitefield nor Wesley exceeded him in ministerial travels. It is probable that no Methodist of his day, it is doubtful whether any Protestant of his day, contributed more from his own property for the spread of the Gospel. His biographer says that he expended the whole of his patrimonial estate, which was large, on his missions and their chapels. He was married twice; both his wives were like-minded with himself, and both had considerable fortunes, which were used like his own. In 1794 was published an account of his missionary receipts and disbursements for the preceding year, from which it appeared that there were due him nearly eleven thousand dollars; he gave the whole sum to the cause.[31] Flying, during nearly forty years, over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; crossing the Atlantic eighteen times; traversing the United States and the West Indies; the first who suggested the constitutional organization of English Methodism by Wesley's Deed of Declaration; the organizer, under Wesley, of the episcopal government of American Methodism; the first Protestant bishop in the Western hemisphere; the founder of the Methodist missions (though not of Methodism) in the West Indies, in Africa and in Asia, in England, Wales, and Ireland; the official and almost sole director of the missionary operations of the denomination during his long public life, and the founder of its first Tract Society, he must be recognized as one of the chief representative men of modern religious history, if not, indeed, as his associate in the American episcopacy pronounced him, "the greatest man of the last century" in "labors and services as a minister of Christ."

He had to suffer the usual disparagements of such men. Even the good men with whom he was associated, in both

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[31] Drew's Coke, p. 317; and Townley in Wes. Mag., 1834, p. 669.

America and England, sometimes were startled with apprehensions for him. The greatest of them all, however, after Wesley, Francis Asbury, whose insight into character was next to infallible, has, as we have seen, left him a eulogy which he would not have pronounced on any other modern man. During the seven years' struggle of English Methodism, after Wesley's death, his interference was treated with suspicious caution by the British Conference. The extreme act of the session of 1792, prohibiting all ordinations, and declaring any one, who should violate the vote, excluded from the denomination, had reference to his ordination of Mahy in France.[32] He was passed by, in the elections to the Conference presidency, during this period; but he bore the disparagement with meekness. The reaction in his favor was at last signal; he was elected President in 1797, and thus, by a happy accident or providence, had the honor of presiding at the very session in which the Church was led triumphantly out of its perilous struggle, with a settled polity and a renewed and hardly paralleled career.

The death of such a man is like the fall of a monarch, but of a monarch who has founded a permanent dynasty and an invincible empire. He lives still, and lives a more effective life than when he was in the flesh, for the freedom of the moral, like that of the intellectual world, is illimitable by time or place. Paul preaches around the earth to-day, as Homer still sings to every scholarly ear. Luther yet lives, leading the moral forces of modern civilization. And we may not doubt that when, in the distant future, the historian shall mention the great men of our day, as we do the Pauls, Augustines, Luthers, and Calvins of the past, the Welsh Methodist, Thomas Coke, will be cited among the chief of those who, in this age, conducted the plans by which the human race is to be regenerated.

But we left his small corps of missionaries on the Indian Ocean, their leader buried in its waves. Let us return and trace briefly their fate.

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[32] See vol. ii, book v, chap. 11.

CHAPTER XII.

METHODIST FOREIGN EVANGELIZATION: ASIA.

Arrival of Coke's Missionaries in Ceylon — The Mission — Results of the First Sermon — Lord Molesworth — He perishes by Shipwreck — First Native Methodist Preacher of Asia — Progress of the Mission — Its Schools — Oriental Scholarship of the Missionaries — The Mission reaches Continental India — Its Growth there — Conversion of Arumaga Tambiran — Evangelization in India.

The missionary movements which have thus far been sketched were but preliminary. We can only glance at their farther progress; for the history of the foreign operations of Methodism—their marvelous extension in Continental Europe, Africa, Asia, the Southern Ocean, America, the Christianizing and civilizing influence, the eventful lives o the heroic men and women who have labored and died for them—would fill more volumes than we devote to our entire task.[1]

On the 21st of May, 1814, the missionaries who embarked with Coke arrived at Bombay, after a passage of twenty weeks. They were received with generous hospitality. In about a month they reached Ceylon, where they were welcomed by the government officers with the most liberal attentions, the government house, in the Fort of Galle, being fitted up for their reception by order of the governor of the island. Lord Molesworth, commander of the garrison, entertained them at his table, and, on the first Sunday after their arrival, attended with his troops the opening of their ministry at the Dutch church. Thomas H. Squance proclaimed as his text, "We have come as far as unto you also, in preaching the Gospel of Christ." Under this first discourse, which was in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," Lord Molesworth and another hearer were "awakened to an intense interest for the salvation of their own souls."[2] That day his lordship had, by appointment, a dinner party at his house, but his awakened spirit was unfitted for all such enjoyments; he went from the company to the apartments of the missionaries, whom he found holding a prayer-meeting, and asked to be remembered in their prayers. Kneeling among them he joined in their supplications, till he received the "peace of God." He afterward adorned the Gospel in all things, and aided greatly the first operations of the mission. On his voyage back to England the ship was wrecked on the coast of South Africa, and all on board, except two or three, were lost. While it was sinking he walked up and down the decks, pointing the terrified crowd of soldiers and passengers to Christ; at last embracing Lady Molesworth they sank into the waves, "locked in each other's arms, and thus folded together in death they were washed on shore." This pious nobleman was the first fruit of the Methodist mission to Ceylon.

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[1] It is to be regretted that the History of the Wesleyan Missions is yet unwritten. The materials for it are abundant, and it would be one of the most extraordinary records of modern Christianity. Scores of books lie before me, for reference in the preparation of these chapters. The missionaries have made invaluable contributions to our geographical, philological, ethnological, and natural sciences, as well as to our most entertaining biographical literature. In the yet undigested state of these materials (some of them, as has been shown, contradictory in essential dates,) I shall hope for indulgence for any defects in my use of them. Important events, names, and dates may be found wanting in my pages. My task however, is to give the historical significance of the subject rather than its annals.

The other hearer awakened under this introductory sermon was a native, of foreign parentage, who became a devoted missionary, the first native Methodist preacher of Asia.

Favored by the aid of the local government, the mission extended its operations rapidly. The missionaries dispersed to different stations. Assisted by interpreters, they established many preaching places. Several priests of commanding influence were converted, and some of their names soon appeared in the Minutes as preachers. An awakened priest of much distinction introduced Harvard into his temple, where the missionary stood up in front of a great idol, and preached from the text, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."

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[2] Smith, II, 5, 6.

In 1815 M'Kenny arrived from the Cape of Good Hope, and the next year a reinforcement of four more preachers, Callaway, Carver, Broadbent, and Jackson, was received. Stations were established among the Tamil population of Jaffna, Trincomalee, and Batticaloa. As early as 1819 schools were opened in the chief villages on the western coast, from Negamba to Galle, and during twenty years a prosperous system of education was maintained till the government took it up in 1834.[3] The education of the Singalese, in their vernacular tongue, was exclusively in the hands of their priesthood till the Wesleyans undertook it in 1817. In one year they had one thousand pupils under their care, and in one year more four thousand. In thirty years they taught more than twenty-one thousand. Their press was meanwhile at work. Some of the missionaries became able scholars in the local languages and literature, and a distinguished Orientalist has borne testimony that "the Methodists have been the closest investigators of Buddhism, the most profound students of its sacred books in the original, and the most accomplished scholars, both in the classical and the vernacular languages of Ceylon."[4]

This mission set itself in array against the most powerful form of heathenism in the world, Buddhism. Ceylon was the cradle and the stronghold of this gigantic superstition, now dominant over Asia. A reliable authority, alluding to the Wesleyans, says that though they have to encounter this most formidable system of pagan idolatry, yet truth is prevailing over error; that several of the priests have become obedient to the faith, and that many thousands of the people have renounced the local advantages of their former worship for the unsearchable riches of Christ.[5] The results of the mission, together with those of kindred institutions of other Churches, are indeed inestimable. Education, public order, the improvements of European civilization, and true piety have been widely spread, and have effectually shaken the ancient heathenism. Buddhism had five hundred temples at Batticaloa when the Wesleyan Mission began; it now has but fifty, and these are fast sinking in decay.[6] The converts to Christianity have shown genuine piety. "I have had every opportunity," says Harvard, "of being satisfied on this point. As in each case of conversion from heathenism the change has been real, so it has been operative. In none of them have there been any lingerings of their former idolatry. They have renounced their old practices; and, so far as my knowledge has gone, their conduct has been in constant conformity to Christian practice."[7] "I have heard," says Fox, another missionary, "in this country, both in the Singalese and Portuguese languages, as artless and as satisfactory sentiments of Christian experience as I ever heard in the English language; and I have seen the colored face beaming with smiles, while the last audible sound, '*Yesus, Wahansey*,' Jesus, my Saviour, passed the dying lips." So strongly founded is the Ceylon Mission, that, as early as a quarter of a century after its commencement, one of the secretaries of the home society could declare, that, if all the missionaries were withdrawn, the native Churches could nevertheless survive, and permanently prosecute the Christianization of the country.[8]

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[3] Newcomb's Cyclopedia of Missions, p. 328.

[4] Sir E. Tenent's Christianity in Ceylon.

The speedy reinforcement of the Mission enabled it to enter continental India, by Bombay and Madras. In 1817 Thomas Lynch was sent to the latter. He found there a few religious Englishmen, who had been reading the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, and who were thus prepared to welcome him heartily. They soon formed the first

[5] Newcomb, p. 241.

[6] Etheridge's Coke, III, 3.

[7] Harvard's Narrative of the Mission to Ceylon and India.

[8] Alder on the Wesleyan Missions. London, 1842.

Methodist Society on the continent of Asia.[9] Lynch became their pastor; but he also preached in Tamil through an interpreter. A chapel was built at Ragapettah, and he speedily penetrated within the walls of Madras and opened one there. Titus Close went to his assistance in 1820; in the same year Squance passed over from Ceylon and founded a Mission at Negapatam, nearly two hundred miles south of Madras, on the coast of Coromandel. The vast field of Hindostan was thus effectively entered by the Wesleyan missionaries.

In 1817 John Horner began his labors in Bombay. He acquired the Mahratta language, preached to the natives, and gathered a school, which in two years had nearly two hundred scholars under tuition. Elijah Hoole and James Mowat arrived in 1820 to establish a station at Bangalore, in the Mysore country. In 1823 Seringapatam was added to the stations under the care of Hoole. There were now four principal stations: Madras, with four missionaries; Bangalore, with one; Negapatam, with two, and Seringapatam, with one. They had already two hundred members, nine or ten chapels, and as many schools. In four years more their schools increased to sixteen, and their communicants to two hundred and fifty, including converted soldiers. Many of the native converts were tested by severe persecutions, by the loss of caste, and by exclusion from their families; but they were found faithful. In 1830 nine missionaries were in the great field. They had twenty-five schools, with a thousand scholars, and three hundred and fourteen communicants; a native ministry had begun, and the printing press was successfully at work. In 1837 Jonathan Crowther was appointed general superintendent of the Indian Missions; for they were found sufficiently promising, notwithstanding their peculiar difficulties, to justify extended plans. Crowther sailed with a reinforcement of five preachers and their families. It was a striking proof of the utility of the Wesleyan Theological Institution (then but recently estabished) that the five missionaries had all been its students, and had acquired within its walls such a knowledge of the Tamil and Canarese tongues that four of them began to preach to the natives immediately. Several conversions of Hindoos distinguished this year, and among them was one that produced a profound impression. Arumaga Tambiran, a man of high family and celebrated for his knowledge, had made pilgrimages of many thousands of miles seeking rest to his inquiring mind. He at last met with some native Christians, whose conversations gave him new light and hope. The conversion of one of his disciples led the learned teacher to converse with Carver, the missionary. Seeking truth, but finding it not, he turned to the Gospel, found peace in believing, and sacrificed his all for it. Some of his disciples attempted to carry him off; he appealed to the magistrate at Madras, wearing his heathen robes in the court, for the last time, that he might be identified as the head of his order. Before the officer and a great multitude he bore an eloquent testimony for Christianity. Alluding to his pilgrimages he said: "Fifty years of my life have been thus spent. I sought all heathen books, but found nothing for the soul. I have taught many hundred disciples, as you know. I discovered nothing in heathen books, in heathen temples, in heathen ceremonies, to satisfy my spirit. I met with this missionary, and he opened to my understanding the way of salvation. I determined to abandon heathenism. By heathenism I got money in abundance, and honors. I was worshiped by my disciples; but my soul shrunk back at its blasphemy against the God of whom I had heard. I knew not how to escape from my heathen friends and disciples, who were about me on every side, when this minister offered me an asylum, a place in the mission premises. There, sir, I went of my own free choice, there I was when the heathen made the violent attempt to carry me away by force, there I wish to remain and be baptized in the name of Jesus, and to teach others also of this Saviour, as some little attempt to remedy the evils of having taught so many heathen disciples a false way." He was baptized, and issued a poetical work against paganism, which was sought with eagerness by the natives, and produced a remarkable sensation. Between 80,000 and 100,000 copies were scattered in a few months; it was read by the children in the schools, sung in the streets, and carried far and wide by the natives. It gave an important impulse to inquiry among the heathen population.

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[9] Hoole's Missions in Madras, Mysore, etc. Int., p. 34. London, 1844.

In 1838 Hodgson established a station at Goobe, in Mysore, and in the next year Arthur, Squarebridge, Garrett, and Pope were sent out.[10] Subsequently presses and schools have been multiplied,[11] and the foundations of the permanent evangelization of India have been so thoroughly laid, by these and other missionary agencies, that the most disastrous political and military outbreaks of the country have proved but temporary interruptions to the steady growth of Christianity. The Gospel has won its triumphant way in many other fields more immediately and more violently hostile; but in none has it had to confront more profound, more subtle, more unyielding difficulties. In few has it secured a stronger intrenchment; and what was once deemed the invincible power of Asiatic paganism, is now unquestionably destined to succumb before the march of Christianity and European civilization, which are invading the Continent on both the south and the east.

At the centenary jubilee of Methodism there were reported nearly twelve hundred communicants in the Wesleyan India Missions; there were twenty-one missionary stations, and forty-three missionaries and assistant missionaries.[12] In Ceylon alone there were fifteen native missionaries and one hundred and thirty-nine school-teachers, and more than six thousand pupils were receiving Christian instruction in the Methodist day schools.[13] Hoole, the missionary, said, not long after, that many thousands of the adult Hindoos had received some measure of instruction in Christianity, and perhaps an equal number of children had been made familiar with divine truth; that every year adds to the number of the converted and the baptized; that Hindooism is no longer undisturbed in its hold on the minds of the natives; that by many who conform to it it is despised, by a greater number it is doubted; that the missionaries are encouraged to persevering exertion in the propagation of the faith of Christ, preaching the Gospel in churches and schools, in the streets and bazars, by the wayside and at the very gates of idol temples, as well as from house to house.[14] Another Wesleyan missionary, cautious against exaggerated statements, declares that veneration for the Shastras, fear of the priests, and belief in caste are rapidly declining; that around all the older mission stations great numbers despise the prevalent superstition; that this feeling is fast extending; that just views of Christianity are daily spreading; that numbers of natives have embraced the Christian faith, and not a few are intelligent laborers in its cause; that the building of a Hindoo temple is rare, the Brahmans are generally alarmed, and in their system are marked symptoms of decadence.[15]

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[10] See Arthur's Mission to the Mysore, etc., (London, 1847,) one of our best books on India. His labors commenced after the period at which my work ends.

[11] "In 1851 and 1852 nearly two millions of pages were printed at the Bengalore press alone, for each year, and more than a hundred thousand people had the Gospel preached to them with more or less regularity by the missionaries." Newcombe, p. 452.

[12] Minutes of 1839, p. 476, and Report of the Miss. Society.

In the vast mission field of India laborers from the Wesleyan, Episcopal, and Calvinistic, Methodist bodies have already met as on common ground, and planted their standards within hailing distance.[16] With the missionary representatives of other Churches they have contributed not a little to those agencies of religion, education, and the press, which, under the auspices of the British rule, are sapping the foundations of the stupendous fabric of Asiatic superstition. Nearly four hundred Protestant missionaries are now abroad in Hindostan alone. More than fifteen hundred native laborers assist them. Many thousands of communicants are enrolled; and tens of thousands of children are receiving education in their schools. Extraordinary changes have occurred by their instrumentality; more than six thousand natives in a single province have abandoned paganism in a single year.[17]

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[13] Report, etc., for 1839. By our day most of the above statistics have about doubled.

[14] Hoole's Missions in Madras, etc. Int., p. 36.

[15] Arthur's Mission to the Mysore, p. 520.

[16] The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists sent Thomas Jones to Bengal in 1840; he was followed by other missionaries. They have gathered a native Church, have translated into Kassias portions of the Holy Scriptures, etc. The Methodist Episcopal Church began its Indian Missions in 1856. They now have twenty-seven laborers, including four native preachers, four native exhorters, and eight native teachers. The Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon Methodists are combined in the London Missionary Society, which, as we have seen, sprung from a Methodistic origin, (vol. ii, book v, chap. 1. and book vi, chap. 5,) and has successful missions

Such was the beginning of those Oriental plans of Methodistic propagandism which, at dates beyond the limits of our narrative, have extended to other parts of Asia, and are now, by both English and American Methodism, besieging the continent on the coast of China as well as on the South. The ripening field receives additional laborers almost yearly, and the faith of the Church looks for harvests there in the future such as it has reaped in Britain, North America, the West Indies, Africa, and the Southern Ocean. More surprising, because more immediate success was to attend it in some of these other fields. To them let us now turn our attention.

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in India, and, indeed, around the world. The Church Mission Society had a similar origin (ibid.) and has had similar success. No just estimate can be made of the missionary influence of the Methodistic movement without taking into the account its early relations to these societies, to the British and Foreign Bible Society, and to the London Tract Society, all of which originated in its agency, as shown in former chapters, and all of which are now among the chief agents of the foreign propagation of Protestant Christianity.

[17] The province of Tinnevelly, under the missionary care of the Church Missionary Society. Arthur's Mysore, p. 522.

CHAPTER XIII.

METHODIST FOREIGN EVANGELIZATION: AFRICA.

First African Mission — Sierra Leone — The Gambia Mission — Mortality of the Missionaries — Extraordinary Liberality — Self-sacrifice of the Missionaries — The Gold Coast — Cape Coast Mission — Account of its Infant Church — The Mission reaches to Ashantee — Scenes there — Liberia — Melville B. Cox — Missionary Martyrs — Results — South Africa — Barnabas Shaw penetrates into the Interior — Rapid Success — William Shaw in Southeastern Africa — Methodism among the Caffirs — Great Results — Summary View of Methodism in Africa.

In the United States and the West Indies Methodism proved itself peculiarly powerful over the genial temperament of the African, and its moral discipline was found to be well adapted to restrain and guide his naturally irregular habits.

The African continent stretches away from Southern Europe, a world of moral darkness, three times as large as all Europe, and comprising a population of a hundred millions. The Wesleyans early turned toward it with eager zeal. In 1795, as we have seen, Coke sent out a colony of artisans to the region of the Foulahs. Its utter failure was reported to the Conference of 1796, and was attributed to its not having been formed "on the proper missionary plan," for the Conference believed that evangelization must precede civilization. They forthwith appointed two missionaries, Archibald Murdock and William Patten, for Africa, but the new project seems not to have been prosecuted. The records of the time afford no farther trace of it.[1]

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[1] We here again meet with confused dates among our Methodist authorities. Hoole dates the origin of the African Mission from this appointment in 1796. (Year Book of Missions, p. 28.) Townley, another

The first Methodist Mission in Africa was that of Sierra Leone in 1811. As early as the year after the death of Wesley, there were Methodists, reported by the Minutes, in that colony, and at later dates they are occasionally enumerated. During the American Revolution many negroes fled from the revolting colonies to Nova Scotia, where scores of them were converted under the labors of the Methodist preachers. In 1792 about twelve hundred of the fugitives were transported to Sierra Leone; the Methodists among them formed classes; two white local preachers, by the names of Brown and Gordon, conducted their religious services; a chapel was erected, and after some time Mingo Jordan, a colored man, began to labor among them. In 1806 Brown wrote to Coke imploring ministerial assistance.[2] We can further trace the obscure history of the Church in a letter addressed to Adam Clarke, in 1808, by Mingo Jordan, sketching his labors among the Maroons from 1805 to 1808. He reports that the converts, and the members of the society in and about Sierra Leone, amounted to one hundred. He had baptized twenty Maroons on one day, and they had "begun to subscribe two cents each per week for the further promotion of the Gospel of Christ."[3] When George Warren, the first missionary, arrived, in

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secretary of the Missionary Society, dates it in 1811, when the Sierra Leone Mission began. (Wes. Meth. Mag., 1834, p. 668.) Alder, also a secretary, agrees with him. (Wes. Missions, p. 6.) Butler, Methodist Missionary to India, says (Newcomb's Cyc. of Miss. p. 75,) "the Wesleyan Missionary Society commenced a mission at Sierra Leone in the year 1796," and proceeds to give conjectural "results of the enterprise." They were results however of the labors of local preachers, who, in Africa, as in America, began the work of Methodism. I conclude that the projected mission of 1796 was not begun, for two reasons which appear to me conclusive: first, that we have no account of it in the Minutes, after 1796, no names of missionaries in the appointments, no returns of members in the census; second, that in 1798 Murdock was in the West India Mission, (Minutes of 1798,) and Patten had retired from the Conference, (Myles's Hist., Alphabetical list, p. 309.) They certainly had no successors till 1811. Drew says expressly (Life of Coke, chap. 16,) that "no missionaries were sent thither until the year 1811."

[2] Meth. Mag., 1807, p. 283.

[3] Ibid., 1808, p. 572.

1811, he found two Methodist chapels, three local preachers, six class-leaders, and one hundred and ten members.[4] The colony at this early day was a scene of enormous depravity. The frequent accessions of hundreds of rescued slaves, at a time, have kept its population a mixed mass of heathens and Christians. Two hundred different nations of Africa are represented in it, each with its peculiar language and peculiar pagan abominations. Its climate is fatal to Europeans, but Wesleyan missionaries have always been ready to be sacrificed for its Churches. Warren died the next year after his arrival, and during about forty years one hundred and twenty-three missionaries and their wives have been sent to it, nearly one half of whom have died under the climate, while many others have had to return with broken constitutions. The Missionary Society was compelled to reduce the term of their service to seven years, then to three, and at last to two. Many perished in a few days after landing, and scarcely any escaped severe acclimating fevers.

William Davies and Samuel Brown followed Warren. The mission quickly extended eastward, from Freetown, to Wellington, Hastings, Waterloo, and Murraytown; and southward to York and Plantains Island; and some of the most extraordinary instances of religious awakenings with which the Wesleyan Missions have been blessed have taken place within its limits.[5] Multitudes of pagans have at such times given up their idols at once; at Murraytown the missionary's piazza has been filled with them, and more than fifty idolaters have been baptized on a single day. At Freetown such a number of idols were surrendered at one time as "no one suspected the place to contain;" all work was suspended, and the natives paraded through the streets carrying their deities to the missionaries and magistrates. Schools have been erected and three thousand six hundred children are receiving Christian education. An

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[4] Methodist Magazine, 1812, p. 316.

[5] Newcomb's Encyclopedia of Missions, p. 77.

"Institute," for the training of a native ministry, has been begun, promising to save hereafter the great sacrifice of European laborers in the mission. In 1839 it reported sixty-eight agents, including four missionaries and sixty-four assistants, nearly two thousand members, and one thousand and thirty-five pupils in its schools.[6]

Such success, amid such adversities, stimulated further efforts. The Church at home felt that Africa must not be abandoned to save any sacrifice of men and money; that laborers must be given as martyrs till native Churches and a native ministry could be effectually formed, and rendered competent to take into their own hands the evangelization of the great and benighted continent.

Far to the north of this station lies Senegambia, a region of pestilence, and of almost certain death to foreigners. In the Gambia district, three hundred miles from Sierra Leone, gleams the only Protestant missionary light north of the latter. The Wesleyan missionaries alone have kept it burning,[7] and have done so by supplying it with their own lives. Repeated efforts by other Churches have been abandoned. In 1821 two missionaries, Morgan and Baker, began their labors at Mandaranee, in the kingdom of Como, on the south bank of the Gambia. They were both prostrated by disease, and the mission had to be removed to Bathurst, on the island of St. Mary, where, as also in Melville, Soldiertown, and Berwick, on the main land, chapels have been erected, and native converts gathered into societies.

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[6] In 1854, Butler says that "in 1811 there was but one missionary, three local preachers, one hundred and ten members, and about one hundred children in the schools, with two small chapels; now there are thirty-one chapels, (some of which are very large,) seven missionaries, one hundred and seven local preachers, over six thousand church members, three thousand six hundred and eight scholars, and more than eleven thousand persons in the pastoral care of the missionaries. According to this time, it may well be said, What hath God wrought!" In 1860 the Wesleyan Minutes report eight missionaries, besides assistants, and five thousand seven hundred and thirty-one members, exclusive of probationers.

[7] Newcomb's Cyc. of Miss., p. 79.

Missionaries were as rapidly supplied from England as their predecessors fell under disease. In 1823 Richard Marshall was sent out. He was soon alone in his work; and in 1830 he also died a martyr to the pestilence. His wife returned, but died on reaching England. Her infant child was borne in the arms of a negro servant maid to the Mission House in London; she was met at its door by several preachers, who had arrived in the city to prepare for the mission fields. With tears she told them of the death of all the Gambia missionaries, for the station had not a single laborer. William Moister, one of these preachers, forthwith gave himself to the Missionary Committee for the deadly post. When he reached the harbor of Bathurst an impressive scene greeted him. The native converts, having received word of his arrival, assembled on the shore, plunged into the water to meet the boat, out of which they lifted the missionary and his wife and bore them in their arms in triumph to the land. "We had no sooner," he says, "set our feet on the shores of Africa than we were surrounded by a large concourse of natives, many of whom had received the Gospel at the hands of those dear men of God who had fallen a sacrifice to the climate at an early period of their labors. They wept for joy at our arrival. They kissed our hands again and again; and, bedewing them with tears, exclaimed, 'Thank God! thank God! Marshall died, but God sends us another minister.'"[8] Native "exhorters" had kept alive the missions. Those mighty peculiarities of Wesley's system, local preachers, exhorters, and class-leaders, have not only been instrumental in the founding of Churches in many parts of the world, but have saved them in many an adverse period when all other agencies have failed or been suspended, and in some instances during successive years. Like so many other attributes of the system, they have proved to be essential adaptations for the great missionary destiny of the Methodistic movement. Moister labored with success, and other evangelists were found willing to go to his help.

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[8] Moister's Missionary Labors, etc., chap. 2.

They planted a station on Macarthy's Island, which, from its commercial relations to the native tribes, especially the Foulahs, for whom Coke had planned in vain, is a most important position. This they made the head-quarters of the great field, and here they established an institution for the education of sons of the native chiefs and kings. Appreciating the value of the mission, and the heroism of the missionary martyrs, a benevolent Englishman, who was not a Methodist,[9] gave, in about five years, more than nineteen thousand dollars for its support. The government gave it six hundred acres of land, upon which the Foulahs were invited to settle. Robert M. Macbriar was sent from England to translate the Scriptures for the Mandingoes and Foulahs. Native preachers were prepared for the mission; the station of Macarthy's Island was at last placed entirely under their care, and Methodism made a lodgment in this difficult part of the continent, which it may be hoped can never be overthrown, notwithstanding the incessant sacrifice of laborers.[10] Out of twenty four missionaries sent to it half have died, and most of the others have returned disabled. And yet, says a good authority, men are found who, with their lives in their hands, rush forward and offer themselves for these posts, as often as they are left vacant by the ravages of disease and death.[11] As early as the centenary of Methodism there were twelve laborers in this district, besides its local preachers, and nearly six hundred communicants.[12]

Following the coast southward, from Sierra Leone, about seven hundred and fifty miles, we reach Cape Coast Castle, the head-quarters of the Gold Coast Wesleyan Mission, the stations of which extend along the seaboard three hundred and fifty miles, from Dix Cove to Lagos, and one hundred and fifty miles to the interior. This mission had an extraordinary origin. Several native youths, under education in the government school, at Cape Coast Castle, became interested in the study of portions of the Holy Scriptures, and asked for a supply of the sacred volume. A religious sea-captain bore their request to the Wesleyan Mission Committee in England, and urged the appointment of a missionary to that part of the coast, offering to convey him thither gratuitously, and to bring him back if he should not deem it desirable to stay. John Dunwell was accordingly appointed,[13] and landed at Cape Coast Castle on the first day of August, 1835. The young native students welcomed him as an "angel of God," for the divine word had touched their hearts; but in six months they laid him in the grave, a victim of the pestilential climate. Great success, however, had attended his brief labors; several natives had been converted and united in a class, a chapel had been built by their own subscriptions, and large congregations had been deeply impressed by the ministrations of the fallen evangelist. "Bad news in the town," wrote the converts the next day after his decease; "the shepherd is taken away, the poor missionary is dead." After burying him, the infant Church met to consult on what they should now do. They held a class-meeting, and at its conclusion inserted in their Minute book a single but significant sentence: "We will remain in the new profession, for, though the missionary is dead, God lives." They knelt down together and consecrated the vow with prayer. They remained steadfast, and became the nucleus of the whole system of the Gold Coast Wesleyan Missions.

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[9] Dr. Lindoe, of Southampton.

[10] West's Life and Journals, chap. 6. West was deputed to visit the Wesleyan missions on the Gold Coast. He died on his passage home, but left journals, which, as edited by Rev. Thomas West, make one of our most valuable works on Africa. London, 1857.

[11] Newcomb's Cyc. of Miss., p. 80.

[12] Report of the Wes. Miss. Soc. for 1839.

The bereaved little flock applied to the Missionary Committee for a new pastor. George Wrigley and his wife were sent out in the autumn of 1836. and in the next year Peter Harrop and his wife arrived to assist them. Soon the wife of Wrigley died of fever. Harrop and his wife quickly perished also, and the remaining missionary arose from a severe attack of the pestilence to find himself alone in the desolate field. He pursued his labors, erected a commodious chapel, and before the close of the year sunk into the grave. The perils of the climate seemed to forbid the entrance of white men into its moral darkness. Fortunately an evangelist, who, though not a native, was of African parentage, Thomas B. Freeman, whose services were destined to give unusual importance to the station, arrived in January, 1838. His wife soon died, but he survived a dangerous attack of the acclimating fever, and laid broadly the foundations of the mission. He found that local preachers and class-leaders had successfully sustained it after the death of his last predecessor, that three schools were maintained, that there were five or six places of public worship, that the congregations were large, and that four hundred and fifty communicants were enrolled on the Church record. The five martyrs had not labored and died in vain.

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[13] Beecham's Ashantee and the Gold Coast, chap. 11. London, 1841.

Freeman soon saw completed the chapel which Wrigley had commenced at Cape Coast Town, the largest religious edifice of Western Africa, except in Sierra Leone. William de Graft, one of the native young men who, by sending for the Scriptures, had led to the founding of the mission, became a local preacher and assistant missionary, and extended its ministrations to Winebah; Dunwell had extended them to Annamaboe; Freeman soon extended them to Akra, Domanasi, Dix Cove, and other places. His color procured him advantages, and his zealous energy impelled him to plan for the promulgation of the Gospel in the interior. His labors for the kingdom of Ashantee have rendered his name familiar to the Christian world. That formidable kingdom, with a territory equal to England and Wales, with a warlike population, a disciplined army one hundred and fifty thousand strong, and one hundred thousand people in Coomassie, its capital—slave-dealers, polygamists, addicted to human sacrifices, to the eating of human hearts for courage in battle, and the most ferocious and powerful of the

African race—offered a field for the utmost courage and devotion of the missionary. He resolved to reach it. His little flock at the Coast spared him willingly, some months, for the dangerous undertaking, and even contributed three hundred dollars for its expense. With a few companions he made his way through the wilderness. The superstitious king of Ashantee, hearing of his approach, and dreading his power as a "Fetish man," but afraid to have him killed, obstructed and delayed his progress, and buried alive two natives to prevent harm from his arrival. In about two months he reached Coomassie; he entered it between two mounds of earth which contained the human victims whom the king had entombed alive, and was received by the barbarous sovereign in the market-place, surrounded by an assembly of forty thousand people. The worst atrocities of African paganism were here disclosed to the missionary, who was the first representative of the Gospel that had entered this moral Acel dama. Forty human beings were sacrificed to the manes of one of the royal kindred, on two of the fifteen days that Freeman spent in the capital. In one quarter of the city the air was rendered fetid by the unburied bodies of the victims. Amid the horrors of this hell on earth he held religious services at his own quarters, and many Ashantees thronged to hear him. An interesting scene relieved the moral desolation which encompassed him: a native, from the farther interior, who had been instructed by Christian Fanti traders, applied to him for baptism, that he might thereby openly profess Christ in the presence of these heathen enormities. The missionary, after suitable examination, deemed him prepared for it, and consecrated the first Christian sacrament in the kingdom of Ashantee.

The design of this visit was to obtain permission from the king to establish a missionary station in the capital. Time was demanded for an answer; and, after very favorable attentions from the court, Freeman was allowed to depart with the understanding that he should return, or send a messen ger, when the rainy season should be passed, for the decision of the sovereign. He reached Coast Castle after an absence of about three months. He had left a favorable and profound impression on the king's mind.

The remaining history of this mission is subsequent to the period assigned to our narrative. It must suffice to say that the publication, in England, of the Journals of Freeman's Visit to Ashantee[14] startled the British public by its disclosures of the diabolical superstitions of the country, and the opportunities it offered for Christian missions. "What shall be done?" was the general inquiry The king of Ashantee meanwhile sent to the coast asking for the establishment of a mission and school at Coomassie, and recalling two of his sons, (who had been sent to England for their education,) that they might be placed under the tuition of the missionaries. The society had not the means for the expense of the undertaking. Freeman was called home temporarily to plead for it. Two missionaries, Mycock and Brooking, were sent to relieve him. Accompanied by his native assistant, De Graft, he bore the message of the king to England; twenty-five thousand dollars were raised for the projected mission, and he returned with a reinforcement of six preachers. At this period six hundred natives on the Gold Coast had been gathered into the Church, several African laborers had been raised up, and chapels and schools had been erected. Freeman, accompanied by the two native princes, returned to Ashantee; land was granted by the king for a mission-house and school, and liberty was given to publish the Gospel in the market-place and the streets. A thousand or more persons statedly attend the Christian worship in the capital, and it is hoped that this favorable beginning will prove a permanent establishment of Christianity in the kingdom.

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[14] In the Wesleyan Missionary Notices, and also in the Annual Report of 1840. Beecham, one of the secretaries, has given a good abstract of these journals, and a history of the Gold Coast Mission, in his "Ashantee," etc., (chaps. 10 and 11,) our best book on that part of Africa.

Subsequently Freeman was invited by the chief of Abbeokuta to establish a mission and schools in his large capital—a scene of as wretched enormities as Coomassie. There are now Christian missions in Ashantee, Badagry, and Abbeokuta, besides Cape Coast Town, Dix Cove, Annamaboe, Damonasi, Akra, and other important places. The queen of Jabin also has applied to Freeman, earnestly requesting him to establish a mission in her dominions. A chapel has been built at Abuodi by its chief. An institution for the education of native preachers has been established at Akra, "and never," writes a missionary, "has the work of God in this distant field been known to assume so cheering an aspect. The influence of Christianity is rapidly extending into the interior."

The Gold Coast mission comprises some thirty preaching places, thirteen of which are, chapels, eight missionaries, seventy other paid laborers, twenty-three local preachers, and nearly two thousand communicants.

The missionary work of Methodism on the Western coast of Africa is yet preliminary, but it has already achieved wonders. Its three districts, Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Cape Coast, report in our day seventy-two places of worship, fifty of which are chapels, twenty-five missionaries, nearly a hundred and fifty other paid laborers, a hundred and thirty-eight local preachers, more than eight thousand communicants, and more than five thousand children under instruction.

Here, on this darkest outline of the heathen world, was American Methodism to meet representatives of its English brotherhood, as in India and China. Melville B. Cox was appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1832 to the colony of Liberia. He went as a martyr, and in pausing at the Wesleyan University, in Connecticut, on his way to embark, he remarked to a student, "If I die in Africa you must come and write my epitaph." "What shall it be?" asked his young friend. "Write," he replied, "'Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up.'" He arrived on the 9th of March, 1833; in less than five months he was in an African grave, but not without having laid the foundation of an important mission. He found in the colony many Methodists, having class-leaders, local preachers, and chapels. He organized them into a branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church; he planned a mission for Grand Bassa, another for Sego, on the river Niger, and a third at Cape Mount, and also an academy at Monrovia. On the 29th of March he began the first Camp-meeting ever held in Africa. Six months after his death arrived Rufus W. Spaulding and Osgood C. Wright, with their wives and a female teacher, Sophronia Farrington. In five weeks the wife of Wright was dead; in three weeks more Wright himself perished. Spaulding and his wife were compelled to return home prostrated by disease. Sophronia Farrington alone remained, offering her life, as she said, "upon the altar of God for the salvation of the long benighted continent." In 1834 John Seys, Francis Burns, and Eunice Sharp arrived. They found nearly two hundred communicants, six teachers, and thirteen local preachers, in the mission, and by the close of the year one hundred and sixty persons were added to the classes. Additions were made frequently to the missionary laborers,[15] the stations were multiplied, schools and a press established, and finally an annual Conference organized, comprising in our day a colored bishop, seventeen preachers, twenty-six local preachers, and sixteen hundred communicants.[16] The American Church has made persistent sacrifices of men and funds for this field. By the year 1850 it had sent out twenty-five white laborers, nearly all of whom have either perished by the climate, or have returned with prostrated health.[17] Only four of its colored laborers have died during this period.

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[15] Among them was Ann Wilkins, a Christian heroine, worthy of particular commemoration. The plan of my work requires me to postpone a fuller account of the missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the separate history of that Church.

[16] Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1860.

[17] Newcomb. p. 98.

The importance of conducting the mission by the latter has been seen, and the attempt promises to be successful.

While these efforts and sacrifices have been made for Western Africa, Methodism has been invading the South of the dark continent. John McKinney went, as we have seen, with Coke, to the Cape of Good Hope, where he arrived in 1814. He was not allowed to preach there publicly, but found Methodist soldiers in the barracks, to whom he ministered privately till he departed to join the mission at Ceylon the next year. Barnabas Shaw, whose name has become venerable to the Christian world, was sent to the Cape in 1815. His only child died on the voyage, and was buried in the sea. His devoted wife was feeble in health, but on their arrival urged him to penetrate far into the interior among the heathen tribes, the government prohibition being still maintained against the mission at the Cape. They started, though without authority from the Home Committee, his wife offering property held in her own right for the expenses of the undertaking, if the committee should not assume them. Providentially a laborer of the London Missionary Society appeared in the town from the interior, and promised to guide them on their route as he returned to his station.[18] A wagon and oxen were immediately obtained, and Shaw and his wife, without knowing whither or to whom they should go, set off on their journey. They soon passed the bounds of civilization; with the thermometer sometimes at 110° in the shade, they continued on their weary route, and on the evening of the twenty-seventh day they met a party of Hottentots, accompanied by a chief, who encamped near them. Shaw communicated with them, and to his surprise learned that, having heard of the "Great Word," the chief was going to Cape Town to seek a Christian missionary for his people. He had already traveled two hundred miles, and there were yet nearly three hundred before he could reach Cape Town, where it was certain he could obtain no preacher. A peculiar providence had apparently arranged this meeting. "Had either party started but half an hour earlier on its journey they must have missed each other, the Africans coming from Little Namaqualand, and Shaw facing toward Great Namaqualand. The delight of this heathen chief may be imagined when, after listening to his statement, Shaw informed him that he was a missionary of the cross looking for a people to whom he might preach Jesus Christ; and when he agreed to go back with him to his tribe, the chief wept aloud, 'and rejoiced as one that had found great spoil.'"[19]

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[18] Memorials of South Africa, by Barnabas Shaw, ch. 7.

The missionary pressed on through mountain fastnesses, where fourteen oxen were necessary to drag his wagon. The chief hastened forward to announce the good news to his people, and on the last day of the journey a troop of Namaquas, mounted on oxen, approached with demonstrations of joy to welcome the embassador of Christ. They returned and rallied the whole town to join in their greetings. A council was opened the next day with a sermon from the missionary. Here, in the far interior, Shaw and his heroic wife were, at last, remote from all white associates, in the midst of African barbarism. He gave himself to hard manual labor by day, and to preaching at night. He built a house, planted a field, erected a chapel, and opened a school. In a month his preaching began to have manifest effect. Deep religious impressions and sincere penitence were apparent among his hearers. The missionary, walking in solitude at night, heard the voice of a native praying in the cleft of a rock, and found that a Namaqua, who had attended the evening service, had afterward retired thither to call upon the invisible God. In June, 1817, he combined seventeen converts into a Church and baptized them. "Their testimony," he says, "as to the commencement of a work of grace in their hearts, was apparent in their deportment as well as in their language." About the same time the first Christian marriage among them was consecrated.

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[19] Newcomb, p. 37.

In July the first administration of the Lord's Supper took place, many weeping at the sight. In December the first Love-feast was held—a scene of singular interest, the chief and many of his people bearing testimony to the power of the Gospel in their own personal experience. The missionary made a plow. "Look," said the simple natives, "look at its mouth; how it bites and tears up the ground." "The faithful showers fell," he says, "on the seed which was sown, and soon springing up, it produced above fifty-fold." The elements of civilization thus began to appear with the dawn of the Gospel.

In 1818 Edward Edwards, another laborer, reached the Mission. The natives turned out at his arrival to welcome him with "songs in the night;" the attention of the inmates of the mission-house was attracted by the sounds of the distant music; a band of converts was passing from hut to hut, singing joyful hymns, and calling upon every family to rise and offer prayer and thanksgiving. Such was the contrast now presented to the former night orgies of their paganism. A forge was brought out by Edwards, plows were multiplied, and industry promoted. Shaw penetrated to the Bushmen, where, after the arrival of farther reinforcements from England, a station was begun by James Archbell. The Mission rapidly extended to other parts of the country. Having soon reached beyond the Orange River, Archbell and Jacob Links (the latter a Hottentot assistant missionary) went to the Great Namaquas, and Kay and Broadbent to the Bechuanas. The details of these undertakings are of a most remarkable, many of them of a thrilling character. The long journeys of the evangelists in the wilderness, their hardships in sleeping on the ground, in suffering want, in their treatment by hostile tribes, by which some of them fell martyrs; the power of divine truth on the consciences of the natives, recruiting the Churches and raising up native preachers; the introduction of the plow and of wheat; the formation of grammars of the barbarous languages; the translation of the Scriptures; the occasional breaking up of entire missions by invasions from hostile tribes, the transpositions of defeated tribes, the pursuit of them by the persistent missionaries, and the establishment of schools and chapels; the triumphant deaths of native converts, and the successive stages of incipient civilization, render the records of these missions the most interesting and most impressive books on Africa that have been given to the world.[19]

While these faithful men were extending the victories of the Cross far into the interior, William Shaw laid (in 1820) the foundations of the Albany and Caffraria Mission in Southern Africa. William Threlfall, the "missionary martyr," went to his assistance in 1822. The next year other reinforcements arrived, and by the request of the Caffir king a mission was established in Caffraria. Threlfall and Whitworth began a station eastward at Delagoa Bay. Edwards went among the Carannas on the Orange River. Threlfall, Jacob Links, and Jonas Jager, (two native preachers) were murdered on their way to the Great Namaquas, but that region was not given up, and to-day two stations, two missionaries, six local preachers, twenty-one teachers, four hundred church members, and about two thousand natives under instruction, are the fruits of the martyred missionaries' attempts. From the Albany station the Gospel has successfully reached the depraved Hottentots, and Caffraria has yielded some of the best triumphs of Christianity in modern times. Much of South Africa is now dotted with Methodist stations. Familiar Methodist names designate points of the country. Wesleyville, Mount Coke, Lesseyton, Clarkburg, Newton Dale, Shawburg, Buntingville, Morley, Hoole's Fountain, Butterworth, Beechamwood, are places of memorable interest. In Southeast Africa, exclusive of the Cape of Good Hope and of the Southwestern province, the results of the missions, as lately published by William Shaw, their founder, are gratefully surprising.[20] Instead of a solitary missionary at Salem, as in 1820, there are now in this extended field thirty-six missionaries, and ninety-nine paid agents as catechists and schoolmasters. The unpaid agents as local preachers and Sunday-school teachers, have increased from about twenty to six hundred and eighty-eight. The number of communicants is five thousand six hundred and eighty-one adult persons who regularly meet in class; and about three fourths of the entire number belong to various African tribes and nations. In the first year of the mission were established three Sunday-schools; there are now eighty of these schools, and fifty eight day-schools. They began with about one hundred scholars; the aggregate number of pupils in attendance on the day and Sunday-schools, deducting for those who attend both, is at present seven thousand six hundred and forty-eight. Worship at first was in the open air, or within rude and temporary structures; there are now seventy-four commodious chapels, some of them large and substantial buildings. The number of other preaching-places has increased from ten to one hundred and eighty-three. The amount of the voluntary contributions of the people, toward the support of the ministry, to the Missionary Society, and to other religious institutions established among them, has advanced from about fifty dollars, raised during the first year, to an average annual sum of at least seventeen thousand five hundred dollars, exclusive of large contributions, from time to time, toward the cost of chapels and school-houses. Two printing-presses, one in Caffraria and the other in the Bechuana country, have been in operation for many years, and have printed millions of pages, chiefly written by the missionaries in the native languages. The entire

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[19] Besides Shaw's Memorials, see Kay's Travels and Researches in Caffraria, (London, 1833;) Smith's South Africa Delineated, (London, 1850;) William Shaw's Mem. of Anne Hodgson, (London, 1836;) Smith's Memorials of Elizabeth Smith, (London, n. d;) Young's Missionary Narrative, (London, 1842;) Broadbent's Miss. Martyr, (London, 1857;) Smith's Mem. of Hodgson, (London, 1854;) William Shaw's Story of My Mission in Southeastern Africa, (London, 1860;) etc., etc.

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[20] The Story of My Mission, etc, by William Shaw, p. 572. William and Barnabas Shaw are brothers.

Bible has been translated and printed in the Caffir language. Thousands of native Africans, who themselves, or their parents, were, at the time the mission commenced, clothed in the skins of animals, and living in the lowest state of mental and moral barbarism, are now decently clothed, and employed in various industrial pursuits. The population, who have already voluntarily placed themselves under the care of the Wesleyan missionaries. in these districts, who more or less frequently attend their ministrations, and who in general have no other means of religious instruction, amount to an aggregate of more than forty thousand, including persons of all the classes and colors that compose the diversified people of this portion of Southern Africa. Since the mission commenced, thousands of adult heathens have been baptized, and likewise great numbers of the children of professedly Christian parents at the British settlements. Before the mission began, it very rarely happened that individuals of different races or colors met together in the churches of the Cape Colony, even at the sacramental table; but at the monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper in the various chapels, the officiating ministers are constantly delighted by seeing numerous communicants, white, black, and brown, European and African, mingling around the communion rails. In the course of years, adds the veteran missionary, a considerable number of the church-members, of various nations, have departed this life in the faith, and have left their ministers and friends satisfactory reasons to believe that they have gone to be "forever with the Lord." "Thus a portion of the harvest has been reaped and safely carried home, and sheaves of the first fruits have been waved before the Lord. It becomes us to refer to these results without pride or boasting, which must be forever excluded. Nevertheless, we dare not refuse gratefully to acknowledge that, by the blessing of the Most High, 'a little one has already become a thousand, and a small one a strong people.' Surely we may say, 'What hath God wrought!' Them 'who were afar off' he hath 'brought near.' They 'who in time past were not a people are now the people of God,' and multitudes that 'had not obtained mercy have now obtained mercy.' 'Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen!'"

South Africa now has sixty-two stations and nearly fifty missionaries, eighty local preachers, and more than six thousand communicants.[21] An institution for the training of native preachers has been established among the Caffirs, and the printing-press is at work at three stations.

In fine, Methodistic evangelization in Africa forms one of the most heroic chapters of modern Christian history. Its success is astonishing if we consider its peculiar disadvantages from the climate, the extreme degradation of the population, and the ravages of almost continual wars The introduction of the elementary arts of civilization, printing-presses, schools, chapels; a considerable native ministry, and institutions for their training; about three hundred and twenty local preachers, nearly one hundred missionaries, at nearly one hundred stations, besides scores of other paid and hundreds of unpaid agents, and more than sixteen thousand communicants, give promise that the great work begun will go on till it shall shake down this formidable stronghold of paganism, and spread Christian civilization over the continent. The African Missions have at least served, above all other foreign stations of Methodism, to prolong the heroic period of its history; it has received, in this field, more of the honors of martyrdom, from the climate, than in all the rest of the earth, and it has never retreated before the inexorable peril.

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[21] Minutes, 1860; and Newcomb's Cyc. p. 43.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOREIGN EVANGELIZATION: OCEANICA.

Oceanica — Triumphs of Christianity — Introduction of Methodism into New South Wales — Its first Preacher a Convict — Aboriginal Missions in Australia — Mission to Tasmania — Methodism among the Cannibals of New Zealand — Perils from the Natives — Destruction of the Mission — Its Resumption — Extinction of Cannibalism — The Missionaries reach the Friendly Islands — Extraordinary Success — Idolatry overthrown — The King converted — Remarkable Scenes — Idol Temples burned down — The Printing-press introduced — A Great "Revival" — The first Royal Methodist Preacher — Character of King George — Extension of the Mission — A Christian War — Five hundred Native Local Preachers — Results after a Quarter of a Century — English Deputation — Methodism among the Cannibals of Fiji — Conversion of the Queen of Vavau — Of the King of Fiji — Pagan Horrors — Other Wesleyan Missions — Calvinistic Methodist Missions — Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church — Summary Review

OCEANICA claims the attention of geographers as itself a vast island world. It is sharing with North America the movement of European emigration, and is undoubtedly destined to become one of the grandest theaters of the human race. The picturesque scenery of many of its islands, the salubrity of their brilliant climate, and the spontaneous abundance of their productions, have arrayed them before the gaze of the civilized world with almost the ideal charms of paradise. Some of the books of the early navigators added to these charms of nature fanciful pictures of humanity, of a simple, happy, and, in some places, a comparatively virtuous people. But the poetic dream has been dispelled. This natural Eden has been disclosed as the nearest vicinage of perdition. Incessant war and murder, habitual violation of even the instinctive virtues of humanity, the extreme degradation of woman, ferocity unsurpassed in Dahomey or Ashantee, polygamy, infanticide, boundless licentiousness, all crowned with cannibalism, which was esteemed a heroic virtue, are at last proved to have been the chief characteristics of these "children of nature."

Here, then, was a sphere of missionary labor which challenged the heroism of Christianity as much as Africa itself. Methodism early directed its attention to the vast and desolate field. The next year, indeed, after the arrival of its missionaries in Asia, its first Australian missionary appeared in New South Wales. This mission was commenced in 1815; it reached, five years later, Van Dieman's Land; in two years more the Friendly Isles and the neighboring groups; in one year more New Zealand; in twelve years more the Fiji Islands; in three years more South Australia; and in one year more West Australia: thus making, by the concluding year of our narrative, lodgments in the most important positions of this ocean world.[1] Its later progress has been such as cannot be contemplated by the most sober mind without astonishment. It has organized, with the consent of the parent Church, a distinct branch of Methodism, an Australasian Conference, comprising more than a hundred and fifty preachers, many of them natives, a host of local preachers, among whom are men of chieftain and of even royal rank, nearly forty thousand communicants, academic and collegiate institutions, a publishing-house, two official journals, a mission ship, and most other provisions of English and American Christianity. It has invaded the darkest regions of cannibalism, has rescued tens of thousands of their population from the lowest barbarism on the earth, and now presents to the wondering contemplation of the Christian world thousands of them with not only reformed, but sanctified lives. Should the Church in European or American lands wish to cite the best exemplification of its faith now on the globe, the purest observance of its Sabbath and of all its external rites, the best practice of both its morals and its more spiritual virtues, in the homes of the common people as well as in the abodes of royalty, it must name these redeemed islands.

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[1] Hoole's Year-Book of Missions, p. 27.

The historian must indeed be perplexed to know how to perform worthily the task of recording, except in numerous volumes, the marvels of these Christian triumphs. The heroic devotion of the missionaries and their wives; the scarcely describable scenes of degradation and ferocity which they had at first to confront: the strangling of women in their presence, as a funeral solemnity at the deaths of chiefs or kings; the spectacles of murdered children, of feasts of human flesh, of scarcely intermitted wars which were more massacres than battles; the hardly disguised and universal obscenities; the benign victories of the Gospel amid these horrors; the overthrow of idols; the burning of scores of idol temples on a single day; the conversion of thousands of idolaters in a single week, hundreds of them, with their chiefs and kings, bowed in prayer, calling, with awakened consciences and tears, upon the invisible God for purification; the erection of chapels, the introduction of schools, of the arts of civilized industry, and of laws more thoroughly Christian than any elsewhere regarded among the most Christian states; the summary suppression and deep abhorrence of all traces of the old heathenism in many entire islands; the raising up of a devoted and powerful native ministry; the conducting of unavoidable defensive war on strictly Christian principles, in which the benignity of the Gospel has been found more powerful, even with savages, than arms or diplomacy; the peaceful and often triumphant deaths of native converts—such are some of the facts which must be described in any adequate history of these unparalleled missions, and to which our limits will allow of but passing allusions.

Like most of the great movements of Christianity, the introduction of Methodism into Oceanica was by the humblest means. New South Wales was an English penal colony—a population of felons cast upon a heathen land,

and held in doubtful check by the sternest rigors of law, with a comparatively few families of virtuous agricultural settlers from England. Among the latter were some Wesleyan Methodists, to whom the Class-meeting, as usual, afforded the nucleus of a Church—the commencement of the whole structure of Methodism in the South Sea Islands. The first Class in Australia was formed on the 6th of March, 1812—a memorable epoch. By the following July it had multiplied to three such meetings, two in Sydney and one in Windsor.[2] A young Irishman, educated and devout, though branded for a crime which had incurred the sentence of death at home, but the penalty of which had been commuted to transportation, was one of the Class-leaders. While awaiting his doom in a prison in Ireland, the zealous Methodists of the town got access to his cell; his conscience was awakened under their exhortations and prayers; he confessed his crime, and experienced the pardoning grace of God and the compassion of the government. His former good character, his talents and education, which had yielded before a strong temptation to commit forgery, and his sincere penitence, justified the clemency of the law, and he was spared to achieve incalculable good to the world. His Methodist visitors took leave of him as he departed for the colony, blessing him with their prayers, and placing in his hands a copy of the Bible. Soon after his arrival he began to read prayers among the people, and at last to expound to them the word of God. "He was bred to the bar," writes one of his fellow-leaders, "is sensible, is of a humble, affectionate disposition, and zealous in the cause of God. I doubt not, (especially could his reproach be wiped away,) that he would make a useful man." But this reclaimed youth exemplified in his own person the most blessed truth he was to teach, that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Such is "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Such was its first Methodist preacher in this great Southern World. Ireland, which gave Methodism to the North American Continent, and the first Wesleyan missionaries to Asia and Southern Africa, need not hesitate to claim the honor of a share in founding the system of Wesley in the Southern Ocean by her branded son.

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[2] Newcomb, p. 165.

The new Church, a score in number, celebrated its first Love-feast at Windsor on the 3d of April, 1812. It applied to the Home Missionary Committee for preachers. Samuel Leigh was sent out, and, on the 10th of August, 1815, landed at Port Jackson.[3] Thus was begun, says a missionary authority, that Methodist scheme of South Sea evangelization, "which, under the blessing of God, has resulted, in the establishment of one of the largest of the British Colonial Churches, having now an independent Conference, and nearly 100,000 persons under its pastoral care; which has also rescued from sin and the sinner's doom hundreds of those whose crimes had driven them from their native land; for the missionaries have sought out the unhappy exiles, and in many an instance have those banished ones, in the land of their captivity, repented under the influence of Christian admonition, and found mercy at the hand of God; and the morning of eternity alone will tell how many of these children of crime and punishment shall be welcomed in heaven by the parents and friends who, in shame and despair, had seldom dared to mention their names on earth. Such was the agency from which originated the Australian and Polynesian Wesleyan Missions to the aborigines of the southern hemisphere, and which this day yields (including members, scholars, and regular hearers) a result of more than 25,000 Christianized heathens to the pastoral care of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. 'What hath God wrought!' To him alone be all the glory!"[4]

Leigh, a most faithful and heroic man, speedily saw three chapels erected at Sidney, Windsor, and Castlereagh, four Sunday-schools opened, and a circuit formed, reaching over a hundred and fifty miles and including fifteen regular preaching places. Walter Lawry was sent out to aid him, and arrived at Sidney May 1, 1818. Leigh, who had been toiling three years, fell upon his neck, and kissing him, exclaimed: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

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[3] Strachan's Life of Leigh, ch. i. London, 1853.

[4] Newcomb's Miss. Cyc., p. 165.

There were at Leigh's arrival but four chaplains in the colony; its foreign population was about 20,000, and was generally and profoundly demoralized. The aborigines were accessible to the two missionaries, and were often met at points on their circuit. The evangelists suffered the severest hardships; they were exposed to insults from the wretched felons to whom they brought the blessings of religion, and to perils from the native savages; they traveled long and rugged routes, sleeping frequently on boards, or on the bare earth, with their saddle-bags for pillows and their overcoats for covering; but they were to witness such triumphs of the Gospel as have seldom been exceeded. They founded effectually and forever Australian Methodism, and the colonial result, thus far, is told by the facts already stated.

Inestimably important as must be their success in the colony, now rapidly becoming the center of the fifth great division of the globe, we turn to the aboriginal missions of both Australia and Polynesia for the greatest trials and triumphs of the infant Church.

In 1820 a mission was projected among the natives of the former. Lawry wrote home for missionaries. "From us," he said, "in a few years, I expect to see them sally forth to those islands which spot the sea on every side of us. The Friendly Isles, the Fijis, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, New Zealand, New Georgia; and then to the north again, very contiguous to us, are the islands of New Guinea, New Ireland, Celebes, Timor, Borneo, Gilolo, and a great cluster of thickly inhabited missionary fields; but we want more missionaries." Ever since his predictions have been rapidly becoming history.

Leigh went to England, pleaded in the Churches for the mission, and for the opening of one in New Zealand, and returned accompanied by William Horton and Thomas Walker. Walker began with a tribe which had learned enough of English to afford him facilities for studying their own language. He had some success; but the unsettled habits of the people defeated his plans for years, and in 1828 the mission was suspended. It was renewed in 1836 with three missionaries, two at Port Philip, South Australia, and one at Perth, West Australia. They subsequently received additional laborers, and multiplyed their stations. In 1838 another mission was begun at Geelong, Australia Felix, with two laborers. Through severest trials the missionaries steadfastly continued their work; they acquired the native languages, they translated portions of the Scriptures, instituted schools at each station, prepared school-books, established the printing-press, and founded a training institution for native preachers and teachers, which now educates some twenty-five young men. In each of these three missions the elementary arts of civilized life have been introduced; each has farms, and thus provides means for a large part of its expenses.

The discovery of the gold regions in Australia having turned the current of European emigration toward this distant country, thousands of reckless adventurers have poured in upon it, from whom the aboriginal race will probably suffer much; but a new Anglo-Saxon empire is founded, and Methodism has laid broadly its own foundations among both the native and foreign population. Its independent organization as a Conference, with its large ministry, its thousands of church members, its numerous chapels, its seminaries, printing-presses, and growing wealth, render it one of the most important if not, indeed, the most important moral security of the rising commonwealth.[5]

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[5] For a good survey of Australian Methodism, see the first six chapters of Young's "Southern World: Journal of a Deputation from the Wesleyan Conference to Australia and Polynesia," etc. London, 1854.

While these efforts for Australia were in progress, the important island of Tasmania, or Van Dieman's land, to the southward, was not neglected. As early as 1820 the London Committee projected a mission for it, and William Horton began there his labors when there was but one other preacher of the Gospel on the island. He describes the population as utterly demoralized, the natives as debased and suffering extremely from the ravages of the white convicts and settlers, who were equally atrocious and unblushing in their vices. But even here were found, at the arrival of the missionary, a few Methodists, who, without pastoral care, had organized classes and were erecting a chapel. The governor had the good sense to encourage the mission. He applied in 1827 for additional preachers, offering to pay, from the public funds, for the passage and partial support of two. Reinforcements were sent out from time to time. In 1832, the convict settlement at Port Arthur was made a station at the instance of the government, and William Butters was sent to labor there. Christianity triumphed over the vices of the degraded and proscribed people, and successive governors of the colony have gratefully acknowledged the services rendered by the missionaries among these outcasts. In 1837 four additional preachers were appointed to extend the operations of the mission. It was farther enlarged in 1839, when the statistics showed nine missionaries, five hundred and seventy church members, and nine hundred and twenty-two scholars.[6] John Waterhouse, appointed in 1839 general superintendent of all the Australian and Polynesian Missions, devised measures which rapidly extended and fortified them, and which led at last to their independent organization and self-support. But he perished by the exhaustion and exposures of his labors and long journeys. One of these journeys in Tasmania so affected his health as to bring his useful career to a close.

Before Leigh went to England he had gone fourteen hundred miles, to the island of New Zealand, for the resto-

Newcomb, p. 749.

ration of his enfeebled health by the voyage, and to ascertain the practicability of a mission among its cannibals. On entering, for the first time, one of the native villages, he passed twelve human heads tattooed, and arranged along the pathway. He "felt that he had reached the region and shadow of death." He resolved thenceforward to wrestle with the powers of darkness, in this their worst domain.

His appeal in England was effectual, though not without opposition from the fears of the Church for the expenses and hazards of so formidable an undertaking. In 1821 he returned to begin his mission. He was baffled in his first efforts by wars among the tribes, and had to seek shelter among the national Church missionaries in another part of the island. There, however, he studied the native language. At last, joined by two more missionaries, Turner and White, he commenced his work on the northeast coast, at Wangarea. The chief welcomed them, but he was a ferocious man, and soon became their enemy. The mission premises were often threatened. The missionaries were confronted by savages whose spears were pointed at their breasts. On a certain occasion Turner found several chiefs seated at a fire, roasting one of their slaves between two logs for their food. His remonstrances, and warnings of the judgments of God upon such barbarities, could, as yet, have little other effect than to surprise them. The mission advanced, however; some of the natives gave evidence of genuine conversion; a house was built, several acres of land were cleared, inclosed, and planted; chapels were erected in two villages by the hands of the missionaries themselves; the native children were beginning to learn to read; but suddenly an invasion of savages, on the 4th of January, 1827, overthrew all that had been done. The family, including three women and their children, flew to the wilderness; the mission-house was burnt down, the fields devastated, and the corpse of Turner's infant child was dug from the grave for its burial clothes, and left exposed among the ruins of the premises. The missionaries and their families wandered on foot through the forest toward the station of the Church settlement at Paihio. On their way, suddenly meeting a large armed force of the natives, they expected immediate destruction. The chief in command ordered, however, a halt, and held a parley with them. Providentially they were permitted to proceed and were conducted through the savage host by a guard. They at length reached the hospitable shelter of the Church station, and went thence to Sydney. The mission was thus totally abandoned.

The unexpected meeting with the native force in the forest was to be providential in another respect. The chief Patuone, who treated the missionaries so generously, sent a request in 1827 for their return, and in the next year they recommenced their good work at Mangungu, within his district. But down to the year 1830, after ten years of labors and sufferings, the mission seemed a failure. Good signs, however, followed. Many of the savages became impressed with the truths of the Gospel. They thronged to the public worship, and began to doubt their own traditions and to abandon their superstitions. Conversions became frequent, and Classes were formed and crowded. The inquiring natives came great distances to the meetings, some rowing in canoes forty miles for the purpose. Additional missionaries arrived, and zealously improved the favorable opportunity. "In reverential behavior in the house of God," wrote one of them in 1834, "the awakened aborigines were a pattern even to Europeans; almost every Saturday some eminent stranger would arrive in order to be ready for worship on the Sabbath, and would there profess his attachment to Christianity; wherever missionaries went on errands of mercy to the surrounding villages the natives were all ready to receive them; and it was manifest that a glorious work was breaking forth in New Zealand." Important chiefs, noted warriors, hoary-headed cannibals, "were sitting at the feet of Jesus, anxious to learn and ready to do the will of God." Many native teachers and preachers were raised up, and extended the labors of the mission along the coast and into the interior. Repeated deputations arrived from the south to invite thither missionaries and teachers; the natives had even erected there several chapels, and assembled to worship the Christian's God, as best they could, by the aid of whatever Christian knowledge they had indirectly received. The London Committee could not disregard the calls of the mission; its laborers were reinforced and its plans enlarged. The missionaries not only mastered the language, but gave it a religious literature. It possessed not a single book when they began their work; but they taught the children to read, introduced the printing-press, and issued thousands of copies of various publications. An institution for the training of native evangelists was established. Chapels were erected in most of the villages around the principal missionary stations, and the "circuit system" of England was adopted. The blessings of civilized life have followed in the train of the Christian virtues. More than a hundred chapels and nearly a hundred and fifty other preaching-places have been opened; twenty missionaries and more than three hundred local preachers are proclaiming the word of life in them. Nearly five thousand communicants are enrolled in the societies, and more than ten thousand hearers attend public worship in the chapels. A Methodist college has been erected at Auckland. Nearly two hundred Sunday-schools and eighty-eight day-schools are sustained. Already three fourths of the adult population can read, and two thirds can write their own language correctly, a greater proportion than in many of the Christian states of Europe.[7] One fact alone is sufficient to crown these triumphs of the Gospel: cannibalism has entirely ceased, and is remembered only with horror.[8]

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[7] Young's Southern World, chap. 7.

[8] Young says: "To name the horrid custom is sufficient to raise the blush of shame, and cause the New Zealander to turn away in disgust at the inhumanity of his former deeds. The last authentic account of cannibalism was the case, at Tauranga in 1842 or 1843, by Taraia, who caught the people as they came out of their place of worship, and in a

Greater successes awaited this enterprise of evangelization in Oceanica. The London Missionary Society, whose operations in the southern archipelago form one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the modern Church, attempted a mission in the Friendly Islands in 1797; but some of its messengers were murdered, others took refuge in the rocks and dens of the islands, and at last left the field. In 1822 Walter Lawry began the Wesleyan mission in Tonga, but he was compelled, by domestic afflictions, to return the next year to New South Wales.[9] In 1826 it was resumed at Hihifo by John Thomas and John Hutchinson; and in 1827 William Cross, Nathaniel Turner, and Weiss, a local preacher of Sydney, went to their assistance, and founded a station at Tongataboo.[10] And thus, writes a visitor to these islands, began that gracious work which has resulted in bringing the whole population, with the exception of a few in Tonga, more or less under the influence of Christianity.[11]

Though the mission had been suspended more than a score of years, since the failure of the agents of the London Missionary Society, the new evangelists were gratefully surprised to find, at Nukualafu, two native converts from the mission of that society in Tahiti, who were endeavoring to teach Christianity to the people. The Tahitian language was but slightly understood by the islanders, yet these humble men had erected a chapel, which was attended by two hundred and forty of the inhabitants, including their principal chief, and a deep impression had evidently been made in favor of the Gospel. It now had speedy effect, and spread with an energy and success which have hardly had a parallel since the apostolic age, if indeed that age

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few minutes had several of them in the oven. Taraia was in Auckland only a few days ago, and was pointed out to me as the individual who possessed the unenviable distinction of having completed the list of those who had indulged in the horrid custom of cooking and eating men."

[9] Lawry's Missions in the Tonga and Fiji Islands, p. 5. New York, 1852.

[10] Hunt's Memoir of William Cross, chap. 2. London, 1846.

[11] Young, chap. 10.

itself affords an equal example. The first teachers of Christianity certainly had no such ferocious barbarism to combat as the infanticide, cannibalism, and other savage customs of these islands presented; and no records show more rapid Christian changes than have been wrought among them.

Early in 1830 John Thomas went to Sifuka, the principal of the Habai Islands.[12] Startling facts there greeted him. The king, afterward destined to be a distinguished character in the religious history of Oceanica, had abandoned his paganism, and was worshiping the true God; the temples of the idols had been converted into dwellings, and a complete triumph was already prepared for the Gospel. This great revolution had proceeded from an apparently small cause. The king had visited Tonga; the truth he there heard had taken hold upon his conscience; he had returned home, accompanied by a Christian native and his wife, teachers at Tonga, and these converts had become apostles in the new district. Thomas forthwith preached among them and began schools, supplying them with native teachers. He baptized the king and other converts. The king erected a large chapel, and from a thousand to fifteen hundred people crowded to the public worship. A thirst for Christian knowledge being awakened among the natives, they assembled daily for catechetical instruction, the king and his chiefs setting the example, and standing in the circle with them every morning to respond to the questions of the missionary. "The king was very zealous in bringing over the people from idolatry, and young and old, rich and poor, masters and servants, might now be seen renouncing the worship of idols and turning to the true God. Among others was Tamaha, a female chief of the highest rank, who had been regarded as a deity, and was one of the pillars of the popular superstition."

The good work spread quickly to other islands. The Christian king went, with twenty-four canoes, on a visit to Finau, king of Vavau, and exhorted him to cast away his idols.

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[12] Newcomb, p. 715.

His word was effective. The king of Vavau gave orders to his servants to acknowledge the true God, and to set on fire the temples of their idols. Some of these buildings were appropriated as dwellings, but no less than eighteen of them were consumed as a testimony against idolatry. A thousand natives joined their sovereign at once in renouncing paganism. Their visitors from the Habai Islands were busily employed from morning till night in imparting to them the elementary instructions of Christianity.

A reinforcement of three preachers, Nathaniel Turner, James Watkins, and William Wood, arrived at Nukualafa in 1831. The difficulty of preparing manuscript books, for the eager demands of the instructed natives, had become formidable to the missionaries; a press was therefore brought by the new laborers, and now translated portions of the Scriptures, catechisms, hymn books, and school books were scattered with all possible speed, for the characteristic mental alertness of the people had rendered the task of their instruction in reading singularly rapid. They were astonished at the sight of the mechanical operations of the press throwing off the means of their intellectual and moral regeneration. A narrator of these wonderful scenes says: "Thousands of the books were in a short time circulated, and were read with great interest. The missionaries were assisted by a host of native helpers, not only teachers of schools, but class-leaders, exhorters, and even local preachers. The overthrow of idolatry, and the reception of Christianity, in the various islands, were in fact effected very much through the instrumentality of the natives themselves. In the schools were some thousands of scholars, of whom a large portion were adults, and about one half females. Several hundreds of the natives, both male and female, were employed as teachers, among whom were some of the most influential of the chiefs, and their wives. Many of the females, besides learning to read, were taught to sew by the wives of the missionaries; and it was truly surprising to see the rapidity with which they acquired this useful art, and the neatness of their work. The religious instruction communicated by the natives contributed essentially to the downfall of paganism, not only in their own and neighboring islands, but even in islands at a great distance. One day the missionaries at Vavau observed three canoes approaching the shore, which proved to be from the island of Nina-fo-ou, three hundred miles distant, which no missionaries had ever visited. Some of the Vavau converts, however, had been there; and such was the effect of their statements that the whole of the inhabitants had cast away their idols. One of their visitors they had detained to afford them further instruction."

Such sudden and incredible changes, among the worst savages on the globe, might indeed challenge doubt of their permanence, were they not now confirmed by more than a quarter of a century. The missionaries well knew that these external triumphs must depend for their security upon the inward personal regeneration of the people. A royal caprice, an ambitious chief, a warlike irruption, might confound all, unless the awakened consciences and purified hearts of the reformed thousands could guarantee it. Hundreds of genuine personal conversions had been witnessed; but the evangelists labored incessantly to render the entire revolution a spiritual and personal reformation. It took more and more this character, and in July, 1834, one of those great moral awakenings, known in all Protestant lands as "revivals," spread over the islands with profound effect. It began in Vavau, was soon prevalent among the Habai Islands, and reached the Tonga group. "Now, hundreds of men, women, and children, including some of the principal chiefs, might be seen in deep distress, weeping and crying to God for his mercy. Many trembled as if they were about to be judged at the bar of God. For a time the people laid aside their ordinary employments, and gave themselves up entirely to religious exercises. The missionaries went about among them, imparting instruction and pointing them to Christ, and many of them soon found peace in believing. The work was not confined to the principal islands, but spread, like fire among stubble, through the whole of them. In a short time every island had caught the flame; everywhere the people were earnestly seeking the Lord, or rejoicing because they had found him. This religious movement was followed by a remarkable reformation of manners. Among other sins polygamy was abandoned; marriage became general, and the natives were more decent and modest in their apparel, many of them dressing in the English style. They set a high value on the means of grace. They kept the Sabbath with remarkable strictness, resting from labor, and employing the whole day in the public and private exercises of religion. They also maintained morning and evening worship daily. In their prayers there was an affectionate simplicity. Their former hatred of each other was exchanged for love."[13] "On Tuesday, July 27," says Turner, of Vavau, "we believe that not fewer than 1,000 souls were converted; not now from dumb idols only, but from the power of Satan unto God. For a week or two we were not able to hold the schools, but had prayer-meetings six times a day. We could not speak five minutes before all were in tears, and numbers prostrated before the Lord, absorbed in deep concern about their salvation. This has not been like the dew descending upon the tender herb, but as the spring-tide, or as the overflowing of some mighty river; all the mounds of sin have been swept away; the Lord has bowed the whole island to his sway. We have to hold two prayer-meetings daily. We have ascertained that the total number in society is 3,066; and the number converted, for the most part within the past six weeks, is 2,262." "In the morning," says Tucker, of the Habai Islands, "we repaired to the house of prayer as soon as it was light. The Lord made 'the place of his feet glorious,' the stout-hearted began to tremble; there was a mighty shaking among the dry bones. What a solemn but joyful sight to behold! One thousand or more individuals bowed before the Lord, weeping at the feet of Jesus. I never saw such distress, never heard such prayers for mercy, or such confessions of sins before. These things were universal, from the greatest chiefs in the land to the meanest individuals, and of both sexes, old and young. The Lord heard the sighing of the prisoners; he bound up many a broken-hearted sinner in that meeting, and proclaimed liberty to many a captive. We were engaged nearly the whole day in this blessed work. I attended four services, and witnessed hundreds of precious souls made happy by a sense of the Saviour's love on that day and the preceding evening. We have not yet received an account, from all the islands, of those who have obtained peace with God during this revival; but from the number already brought in by the leaders, we believe that upward of 2,000 were converted to God in the course of a fortnight."[14]

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[13] Newcomb, p. 716.

Taufaahau, the king of the Habai Islands, who had been baptized with the name of George, and his queen Charlotte, were active in these remarkable scenes. He became a class-leader, and afterward a local preacher, and thus gave to that useful branch of the Methodist ministry the peculiar distinction of the first royal name of the modern Christian ministry. Personally, intellectually, and morally, he is fitted to be a king. He is of colossal physical proportions, of calm and dignified manners, has a face expressive of the best character, is brave, prudent, clement, and decided. His portraits need but the longer hair of Washington to be almost a facsimile of that great man. He has given his people a code of laws, necessarily simple in their adaptation to the islanders, but unsurpassed, in their Christian morality, by the legislation of any civilized nation.[15] He commands not only the reverence but the affection of his people and of his lowest menials. In a scene which will recall to American Methodists the well-known example of Garrettson, one of their founders, he emancipated his household slaves. Summoning them around him on an evening, and addressing them respecting the great blessings which Christianity had brought to the islands, he contrasted their former heathen wretchedness with their new condition, and said: "You are no longer slaves; you are your own masters, and may go and reside where you please." They all burst into tears and sobbed aloud; the king himself and his queen could not refrain from tears. Two of them begged to be allowed to live and die with him; but he would not consent to their remaining as slaves. "If you wish," he said, "to reside a little longer with us, well; if you desire to go and dwell in any other island, please yourselves."

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[14] Wes. Miss. Notices, vol. viii, p. 149.

[15] Young gives an outline of it in his Journal. App. G.

He gave a church to the mission, said to be the most imposing edifice ever built in the Friendly Islands. A thousand of his people were employed in its erection. The spears of his ancestors were converted into rails for the Communion altar, and two clubs, formerly adored as deities, were placed as pillars to the pulpit stairs. At its dedication the king himself preached a sermon, from Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the temple, to thousands of his people, who came from all the islands, leaving in some of them only the infirm and aged, with necessary attendants.[16]

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[16] In 1845 King George succeeded to the sovereignty of all the islands. Commander Wilkes thus alludes to him and his people, in the "United States' Exploring Expedition": "I landed at Nukualafa with all the officers that could be spared from other duties. We were received on the beach by Mr. Tucker, one of the missionaries, and were at once surrounded by a large number of natives. It was impossible not to be struck with the great difference between these people and those we had left in New Zealand; nothing of the morose and savage appearance so remarkable there was seen. Here all was cheerfulness and gayety; all appeared well fed and well formed, with full faces and muscles. The number of children particularly attracted our notice, in striking contrast with the New Zealand group, where but a few were seen. We waited some minutes for King George. When he made his appearance I could not but admire him: he is upward of six feet in height, extremely well proportioned and athletic; his limbs are rounded and full; his features regular and manly, with a fine open countenance and sensible face, all which were seen to the greatest advantage. He at once attracted all

Peter Turner and several native Christians left Vavau in 1835, on a voyage of one hundred and seventy miles to Keppel's Island, where there immediately ensued a general abandonment of heathenism. Turner staid there about three months, and baptized more than five hundred adults, besides two hundred children, and united in Christian marriage nearly two hundred and fifty persons. Schools were begun with more than five hundred pupils, and were left under the care of native teachers, who had accompanied the missionary. At a subsequent visit to this island, and to that of Nina-fo-ou, by Thomas, about eight hundred adults and more than half as many children were baptized. A majority of the inhabitants of these two islands were thus placed in communion with the Church.

This surprising reformation has spread from island to island with irresistible power, notwithstanding the occasional attempts of pagan chiefs to revolt and to produce a reaction, and the plots of French priests to repeat there the deplorable scenes which they have enacted in Tahiti. The wisdom and Christian virtues of King George have, under the divine blessing, saved his people. He has conquered the opponents of Christianity by its own virtues. Aided by Romish agents, some of his Tonga pagan chiefs rebelled, refusing further submission to his authority, though he never used it improperly for the enforcement of his religious views. They perpetrated many atrocities, and after long forbearance, he was compelled to lead his troops in defense of the laws. "But he went forth," says a visitor of the islands, "as the disciple of Him who came not into the world to destroy men's lives, but to save them; and, by conduct previously unknown in military tactics, he destroyed his enemies without slaying them, and transformed them into admiring and ardent friends. We halted under the shade of a large tree,

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eyes; for, on approaching, every movement showed that he was in the habit of commanding those about him. With unassuming dignity he quietly took his seat."

where King George had sat to receive the submission of his rebel subjects, and where, according to the custom of the country, they came to rub their noses against the soles of his feet, in token of surrender. They approached with fear and trembling, knowing that they had forfeited their lives to the laws of the land; but, as they came, George magnanimously said, 'Live!' In a transport of joy and wonder they thanked the king for his clemency, when he told them to thank Jehovah, whose *lotu* (religion) had influenced him to spare their lives. As he regularly observed in his camp the hours of morning and evening prayer, these subdued chiefs, whose 'hearts' (as one of them told me) 'the king had slain,' requested permission to unite in God's worship, and for the first time were they to be seen bowing the knee to Jesus. The king returned from the field, not with garments rolled in blood, but richly laden with the blessings of them that had been ready to perish, and rejoicing more in the triumphs of grace which God had enabled him to achieve, than in the conquests gained over his enemies. Long will this shady place be remembered with gratitude as that where hearts were conquered by love, and foes overcome by something more potent than powder and ball."[17]

As it had been customary to slay the vanquished, this act of clemency could not fail of deep effect on the pagan chiefs; they returned with the king to his house, and at his family altar acknowledged the true God, more than a hund red of their people following their example. Sir E. Howe, who had come to his aid with a ship of war, beheld the scene, and said to a missionary: "I saw the noble and Christian conduct of King George. He can only be compared to Alfred the Great, of blessed memory. He is worthy of being called a king. He is the greatest man in these seas." The French commander, Belland, arrived afterward with the Moselle, to bear a charge against the king from the Romish governor of Tahiti. He was surprised to see the native sovereign come on board with full records of the affair, inclosed in a tin case, and with the manners, not of a savage, but of an intelligent Christian ruler. With respect and admiration he acknowledged, in the name of the French Government, "George, King of the Friendly Islands," and declared that "he had seen and conversed with many chiefs in the South Seas, but that he had not seen one to be compared in knowledge and abilty, in courage and dignity, to King George." Young, who visited the islands not long after the war, says: "On returning from the chapel the principal rebel chief during the late war was introduced to me. The clemency of the king had broken his heart, and had destroyed the enemy without slaying the man. The triumph of Christian love and forgiveness during the recent conflict in Tonga seems utterly to have confounded both paganism and popery, and brought much glory to God."

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[17] Young, chap. 10.

In no other portion of the Wesleyan Mission field have so many native laborers been raised up; about five hundred of them are licensed to preach, with their king at their head, a model to them of talent and piety. An institution for their education has been established. The press is in effective operation. Schools and chapels adorn the islands. The horrors of their former paganism have been totally extinguished.

These triumphs of the Gospel, in the fiercest arena of the powers of darkness, could not fail to command the interest of the civilized world. Their results have not disappointed the friends of Christianity. About thirty years after the commencement of the mission, by Lawry, the Wesleyan Conference sent out a deputation to visit it and the other stations of Oceanica. Robert Young thus officially inspected its most important posts, sailing among them on board the mission ship "John Wesley," and bearing with him a cargo of New Testaments in the vernacular language. He preached to them by interpreters, and joined in their prayer-meetings, where the king and queen participated in the devotions. "The Scriptures," writes the visitor, "are so valued in these islands that a sovereign would not have purchased a copy of the New Testament before our arrival. Many possessed the holy treasure, but esteemed it more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and would on no account part with it. The queen, in her prayer, gave thanks for the arrival of the Scriptures, and said the book was valuable, not because of its paper and ink, but because it brought good tidings to sinners, and from Genesis to Revelation is full of the Saviour. And when she, in a tremulous but earnest and melodious voice, thanked God for his book, the response from every part of the chapel told that she had touched a tender chord, and elicited the grateful feelings of many a heart. Another female, in her prayer praised the Lord that I had come among them, and prayed that my visit to Tonga might be as the visit of Barnabas to Antioch; that I might see the grace of God and be glad, and exhort them with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. Several other persons exercised their gifts; and although I understood little of what was said, yet I felt that the people had power with God, and that his presence and glory filled the house. When the king prayed many a tear was shed, and many a burst of praise was heard. The queen, in her petition, alluded to the angelic anthem sung on the plains of Bethlehem, exclaiming, 'It is true! Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men. This glory we now see; this peace and good-will we now feel.' And, on referring to myself, she thanked God for my visit, not merely that they had seen my face and heard my voice, but that I had preached unto them the glorious Redeemer; then, overcome with emotion, she sobbed aloud, and many a heart was moved, and many a sigh went up to heaven. O what a service! May I never lose its holy savour!" At the conclusion of his first Sunday among them he says: "Thus ended the public services of my first Sabbath in the Friendly Islands, a day of light and power, and glory, which can never be forgotten in time or in eternity. If these islanders be in many things behind the polished nations of Europe, they are much before them all in their high reverence of the Lord's day. In no part of the world have I ever seen the claims of the Sabbath so fully and so universally regarded as they are in this land." His largest expectations were surpassed by the results of the Mission. "With the exception of about fifty persons, the entire population have embraced Christianity. It is true they have not all felt its saving power, yet they have all been more or less benefited by its influence, and some thousands of them have experienced its transforming power, and are now, by the grace of God, adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour. There were many things that delighted me during my visit to this interesting land. I was pleased with the reverence of the people for the Lord's day. On that day nothing is heard or seen infringing upon its sacred right. If people are beheld coming from their habitations, it is that they may go to the house of the Lord and inquire in his holy temple. If a canoe is seen in the offing, it is conveying a local preacher to his appointment on some distant island that he may preach Jesus to the people. If noises occasionally fall upon the ear, they are not of revelry or strife, but songs of praise and earnest prayer to the God of heaven. I was also delighted with the attention of the people to family worship. That duty is strictly attended to, there being very few families, bearing the Christian name, throughout the length and breadth of these islands, that have not a domestic altar on which is presented the morning and evening sacrifice. It is truly exhilarating to be in any of their towns or villages at the hour of family worship. I have been so privileged; and, as I listened to prayer and praise ascending from nearly every dwelling, my heart was filled with the deepest emotion, and my spirit felt as if at the gate of heaven. I was also pleased with their proficiency in learning. Not less than eight thousand of them can read the sacred Scriptures, and five thousand can write their own language, and some of them very elegantly. I examined several of the schools; many of the pupils, in addition to reading and writing, had acquired a very respectable knowledge of geography, arithmetic, natural history, and some other branches of learning. A few of them were even making attempts to master astronomy. I had also the pleasure of examining the students of our normal institution, and was greatly delighted with their proficiency. Though as a nation they are, after all, but in a transition state, yet, in point of truthfulness, and honesty, and hospitality, and temperance, and chastity, they might be placed in most advantageous contrast with the refined and polite nations of the civilized world. King George is a most decided and exemplary Christian. I had the privilege of being with him for nearly two months, and during that period I never heard a foolish word drop from his lips, nor did I ever see anything in his spirit or deportment inconsistent with the most entire devotedness as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a local preacher, and I heard him preach in Fiji a most interesting, powerful, and effective sermon."

To the west of the Friendly or Tonga Islands lies the Fiji group, comprising one hundred and fifty islands, with a population variously estimated between two and three hundred thousand. War was the chief occupation of the people; cannibalism, infanticide, strangling of widows, and all the enormities of the worst heathenism, were their characteristic customs. The triumphs of the Gospel among the Tonga savages justified the hope of successful missions in these regions of death. In 1835 William Cross and David Cargill arrived at Lakemba from the Mission of Vavau.[18] As they landed on the beach they were confronted by a hundred tattooed natives armed with muskets, long sticks pointed with bayonets, and spears and clubs. The missionaries explained the object of their visit; word was sent to their chief, and they were received. They built a slight structure for their home, and began to preach. After some months they baptized several natives who had learned the primary truths of Christianity in the Friendly islands. Others were rapidly converted from paganism, notwithstanding the opposition of the chief, and the Fijian Mission was established.

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[18] Cargill's Mem. of Margaret Cargill, etc., chap. 7. London, 1841.

The missionaries procured reinforcements from the native assistants of Vavau, and in a few years their ministrations were extended to many of the islands. After ten years of faithful labors, amid abominations and atrocities which hardly admit of description, and with continual though often obstructed progress, one of those extraordinary visitations of divine influence which had occurred in the Friendly Islands, and which have at times distinguished the whole history of genuine Christianity, took place among these cannibals. It began in Viwa, and rapidly extended from island to island. "Business, sleep, and food," says one of the missionaries, "were almost entirely laid aside. Some of the cases were the most remarkable I have ever heard of; yet only such as one might expect the conversion of such dreadful murderers would be. If such men manifested nothing more than ordinary feelings when they repent, one would suspect they were not fully convinced of sin. The results of this work of grace have been most happy. The preaching of the word has been attended with more power than before the revival. Many who were careless and useless have become sincere and devoted to God. The experience of most has been much improved, and many have become by adoption and regeneration the sons of God." "The people, old and young, chiefs and common people, were broken-hearted before the Lord," writes Watsford, another missionary; "they evinced indescribable agony and bitterness of spirit. They felt themselves great sinners, and their repentance was deep and genuine. The joy of those who were pardoned was as great as their distress had been. At some of our meetings the feeling was overpowering, the people fell before the Lord, and were unable to stand because of the glory." Perhaps the most remarkable instance of the power of the Gospel which this revival presented, was the conversion of a chief, whose name was Varin. He had long been noted as the human butcher of Seru. He was a man of terrible character. But by the faithful warnings and instruction of the missionaries his guilty conscience was aroused; and now, like another Paul, he is preaching the faith he once labored to destroy.[19]

The queen of Viwa was converted. "Her heart," writes Hunt, "seemed literally broken," and with tears she turned to him for light and hope amid a sublime baptismal ceremony by which a number of natives were received into the Church. "As soon," he continues, "as the baptism was concluded, as many as could chanted the Te Deum. It was very affecting to see upward of a hundred Fijians, many of whom were, a few years ago, some of the worst cannibals in the group, and even in the world, chanting, 'We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord;' while their voices were almost drowned by the sobs of broken-hearted penitents. I weep while I think of it. What a gracious God is our God! and blessed be his glorious name forever!"

At a later period Thakombau, highest chief or king of the Fijians, renounced paganism at Bau, the capital island. "What a foundation," wrote Calvert, a missionary, "of great and everlasting good to Fiji! Fiji's brightest, best day, and never to be forgotten." The king and his queen were both baptized, and he addressed the people who had assembled to witness the occasion. "It must have cost him," writes Waterhouse, another missionary, "many a struggle to stand up before his court, his embassadors, and the flower of his people, to confess his former sins. And what a congregation he had! Husbands whose wives he had dishonored, widows whose husbands he had slain, women whose sisters had been strangled by his orders and whose brothers he had eaten, and children the descendants of those he had murdered, and who had vowed to avenge the wrongs inflicted on their fathers! A thousand hearts heaved with astonishment and fear as Thakombau gave utterance to the following sentiments: 'I have been a bad man. I disturbed the country. The missionaries came and invited me to embrace Christianity; but I said to them, I will continue to fight. God has singularly preserved my life. I desire to acknowledge him as the only and true God.' He was deeply affected, and spoke with great diffidence."[20]

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[19] For an account of this "revival," and many other remarkable facts, see Rowe's Life of John Hunt, Missionary to the Cannibals, chap. 11.

The enormities here alluded to were familiar facts to the missionaries, and are too well authenticated to the world to allow of a doubt. Young, the official visitor, says that on inquiring into the Fijian propensity to cannibalism, he heard from missionaries, and others, some most horrifying statements. They said that the evil was daily practiced in some parts of the country; that a victim was sometimes put into the oven alive, at other times mutilated, and made not only to witness the cooking of his own flesh, but also to feed upon it; that men sometimes killed and ate their own wives; and that on one recent occasion at Tokai, on the island of Ovalau, four miles from the mission-house, a man killed his wife, cut up the body, filled two baskets with the parts; and as his helpless child, that stood by witnessing the horrid operation, began to cry, he tried to soothe it by offering it a portion of the mother's flesh. A person from Manilla, named Wani, went in his vessel to Gnaw. He bought a cask of oil, and was returning, when he was caught in a squall. Some report that his boat capsized; others, that it was sunk by the natives. Wani managed to swim ashore, he was then stripped, bound, and baked alive. When cooked, his face was painted, his clothes put on, and after being paraded a short time, he was stripped and devoured. Binner, a missionary, knew both these men well. Joel Bulu, who has extensive knowledge of the Fijians, informed the visitor that he knew a man who told his wife to gather some sticks; he then directed her to heat the oven That being done, she inquired where the food was that he intended to have cooked. "You are the food!" he replied He then "clubbed" her, and placed her in the oven. This wretched man afterward became a Christian. Seru cruelly mutilated a man, roasted several pieces of his flesh on the coals, and ate them in the victim's presence; and the late king of Rewa cut off the arm of one of his servants, and compelled her to eat a part of it! Young adds: "I could state worse, very much worse things than these, that have occurred in this land of darkness and blood; but I dare not write them, they are too horrible to be told."[21]

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[20] As this work is passing through the press I find in the London Athenæum (November 24, 1860,) a letter dated Rewa, Fiji, August 6, 1860, apparently from a traveler who has no connection with the missions, but who witnesses to the permanent results of the king's conversion. The letter says: "Bau was opposed to the missionaries, and the ovens in which the dead bodies of human victims were baked were scarcely ever cold. A great change, however, has taken place. The king and all his court have embraced Christianity; the heathen temples are in ruins; the sacred groves in the neighborhood cut down; and in the great square, where formerly the cannibal feasts took place, a large church has been erected. It was not without emotion that I landed on this blood-stained soil, where, probably, greater iniquities were perpetrated than ever disgraced any other spot on earth. It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and, instead of the wild noise that greeted former visitors, one heard nearly from every house family prayers. To bring about such a change has, indeed, required no slight efforts, and many valuable lives had to be sacrificed; for, although no missionary has ever met with a violent death, yet the list of those who have died in the midst of their labors is proportionally very great"

The visitor to whom these facts were related went tc Bau, the capital, before the conversion of the king, and describes it as "doubtless the deepest hell on earth." "Here I was shown," he says, "six ovens in which eighteen human beings had recently been cooked, in order to provide a feast for some distinguished stranger, and the remains of that horrid repast were still to be seen. I next went to one of the temples, at the door of which was a large stone, against which the heads of the victims had been dashed previous to their being presented in the temple, and that stone still bore the marks of blood. I saw—but I pause. There are scenes of wickedness in that country that cannot be told. There are forms of cannibalism and developments of depravity that can never be made known. No traveler, whatever may be his character, could have the hardihood to put on record what he witnessed in that region of the shadow of death." "But," remarks the same authority, "we have three thousand of the people in church-fellowship, four thousand in the schools, and six thousand regular attendants on the ministry. We have fifty native teachers, who are valiant for the truth, and who in different parts of the land are making known the power of Christ's salvation." Since his visit the Gospel has advanced triumphantly, casting down, as we have seen, the temples of the very capital, and gathering kings and subjects within the Church.

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[21] Walter Lawry gives similar and if possible still worse examples in his Missions to the Tonga and the Fiji Islands, pp. 88 and 128. See also Fiji and the Fijians, by Thomas Williams and James Calvert, (New York, 1859,) a book of extraordinary interest; one of the most important yet produced by the Wesleyan missionaries; it has commanded the general attention of the literary world by both its ethnological value and its surprising accounts of the conflict between Christianity and cannibal paganism in the Southern Ocean.

In the Friendly and Fiji Islands there are now more than two hundred and thirty preaching-places, more than one hundred and fifty of which are chapels; there are nearly one hundred paid laborers, twenty-three of whom are missionaries; eleven hundred day-school teachers, about three hundred day-schools, and twelve thousand day-scholars; five hundred and forty local preachers, and more than fifteen thousand communicants. The entire Bible has been translated into the languages of both groups.

Such are but outlines of the victories of Christianity, by the agency of Methodism, in the islands of Oceanica; the details would make perhaps the most thrilling record of modern Christian history, but they would fill volumes. Many of even the names of the evangelists, native and foreign, remain unmentioned in our narrative, names which will hereafter probably be as sacred in this southern world as are those of the canonized saints and Christian founders of ancient and medieval Europe. Their devoted wives have scarcely been alluded to, women who have been hardly less useful than their husbands by teaching the natives the household arts of Christian civilization, and who have willingly spent their lives amid these savage abominations, their homes being sometimes in the vicinity of the yet heated ovens of cannibalism, their eyes daily witnessing scenes the reading of which makes the strongest nerves of civilized men to shiver; they have had to part with their children at an early age for education in England away from these indescribable enormities; they have died blessing God for their terrible but useful lot, resigning themselves to sleep, till the morning of the resurrection, in graves among the reminiscences of these commingled heathen horrors and Christian triumphs. No other "heroines of Methodism" are equal in number or in character to those recorded on the roll of its foreign missions.

Methodism in the South Seas, as already stated, has been organized into an independent body. The Australasian Wesleyan Conference, with its more than one hundred and fifty preachers, is now, financially, nearly self-sustaining. Its nearly forty thousand communicants contribute about $50,000 annually for missions alone. It comprises three divisions: the first includes Australia proper and Van Dieman's Land, the districts of which are adapted to the colonial divisions of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, West Australia, and Tasmania. These are considered the home field of the Conference. Its second branch comprehends New Zealand, and is divided into the two districts of Auckland and Wellington. Its third division is entirely missionary, comprising the Friendly and Fiji Islands, and reported at the latest date no less than fifteen thousand communicants, besides many thousands who are reclaimed from paganism, but are not yet admitted to the communion of the Church. In the Fiji Islands alone at least sixty thousand have abandoned their idolatry.[22]

Wesleyan Methodism has missions also in Germany,

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[22] Wes. Mag., 1860, p. 568.

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Gibraltar, Malta, and China, reporting an aggregate of about three hundred communicants. Its Canadian Conference sustains them on an extensive scale among the aborigines and settlers in the "Huron and Superior district," in Hudson's Bay Territory, and in British Columbia. Its Eastern British American Conference sustains them in Labrador and other places. It has to-day an aggregate of at least five hundred and nine missionary circuits, one thousand seven hundred and thirty salaried missionary laborers, seven hundred and sixty-three of whom are regular preachers, one hundred and forty-seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-six missionary communicants, nearly four thousand chapels and other preaching-places, one hundred and twenty-two thousand children under instruction, and eight printing establishments.[23] In less than sixty years (since 1803) the Wesleyan Church has given nineteen million dollars for foreign evangelization.

Meantime the other Methodistic branches have shared in this spirit of foreign propagandism, so legitimate to the great movement. The English Calvinistic Methodists chiefly originated, as we have seen, and still continue in, the London Missionary Society, one of the most important institutions of the kind now in the Protestant world, embodying a large proportion of the Dissenters of the United Kingdom. In continental Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia, the representatives of the two societies have met on fields of common spiritual warfare and victory, and with a common spirit of charity and co-operation. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists were long included in the London Missionary Society, but have now a society of their own, with missions to their ancient kindred, the Bretons of France, to the Jews, and to the Kassias of Bengal. The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, confined in its missionary labors, for many years, to the aborigines, the slaves, and the foreigners of its vast domestic field, has now missions in China, India, Africa, Bulgaria, Germany, Scandinavia, South America, and the Sandwich Islands. Its foreign missionaries are one hundred. Including those to foreign settlers in the United States, they amount to four hundred and nineteen. Its communicants in foreign lands and among foreign settlers at home, are more than twenty-six thousand. Nearly three hundred of the missionaries preach in the German language, and about twenty-one thousand of of the communicants are Germans.[24] The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has missions in China, among the foreign settlers in the United States, among the American Indians, and the Southern slaves. About three hundred and sixty of its preachers are enrolled as missionaries.[25] American, like British Methodism, has become thoroughly imbued with the apostolic idea of foreign and universal evangelization. With both bodies it is no longer an incidental or secondary attribute, but inwrought into their organic ecclesiastical systems.

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[23] Including France, Oceanica, and the British North American Province, all of which are now independent but affiliated organizations.

Such has been the missionary development of the Methodistic movement, such the third phase of its history. When this new era fully set in, the prominent men, who have been described as its chief actors, were prepared to take the lead of the sublime enterprise. It deepened and widened under their labors till it became the great characteristic of modern Methodism, raising it from a revival of vital Protestantism, chiefly among the Anglo-Saxon race, to a world-wide system of evangelization, which has reacted on all the great interests of its Anglo-Saxon field, has energized and ennobled most of its other characteristics, and would seem to pledge to it a universal and perpetual sway in the earth. Taken in connection with the London and Church Missionary Societies, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the London Tract Society, to all of which, as has been shown, Methodism gave the originating impulse, and the Sunday-school institution, which it was the first to adopt as an agency of the Church, it is not too much to say that it has been transforming the character of English Protestantism and the moral prospects of the world.

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[24] Report of the Missionary Society of the M. E. Church, p. 71. New York, 1860.

[25] Tefft's Methodism Successful, etc., p. 52. New York, 1860. The minor Methodist bodies have about four hundred missionaries. Ib., p. 53.

Its missionary development has preserved its primitive energy. According to the usual history of religious bodies, if not indeed by a law of the human mind, its early heroic character would have passed away by its domestic success and the cessation of the novelty and trials of its early circumstances; but by throwing itself out upon all the world, and especially upon the worst citadels of paganism, it has perpetuated its original militant spirit, and opened for itself a heroic career, which need end only with the universal triumph of Christianity. Wesleyan Methodism alone was considered, at the death of its founder, a marvelous fact in British history, but to-day the Wesleyan missions alone comprise more than twice the number of the regular preachers enrolled in the Wesleyan Minutes in the year of Wesley's death, and nearly twice as many communicants as the Minutes then represented. The number of itinerant Wesleyan missionaries (not including assistant missionaries) is nearly equal to half the present Wesleyan ministry in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[26]

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[26] Including not the domestic, but the foreign missionaries of the British Conference, proper, and the affiliated French and Australasian Conferences, together with the missionaries (proper) of the British North American Conferences. The statement in the text does not take in the "probationers" nor the "supernumeraries" of either the domestic or the missionary work. Compare the table on page 123 of the Wesleyan Minutes for 1860. On the civilizing influence of these missions see "Christianity the Means of Civilization: Shown in the Evidence given before a Committee of the House of Commons, on Aborigines," etc., by Beecham, the Wesleyan Missionary Secretary; Coates, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society; and Ellis, Secretary of the London Missionary Society. London, 1837.

CHAPTER XV.

METHODISM IN IRELAND.

Wesley in Ireland — Coke in Ireland — English Preachers — The Irish Rebellion — George Taylor's Sufferings — Gurley's Prayer-meetings in Prison — Methodist Loyalty — The Irish Missions — James M'Quig — He edits the Vernacular Bible — Charles Graham — His Rencounters with Mobs — Bartley Campbell's singular Conversion — Gideon Ouseley — Graham and Ouseley preaching on Horseback — William Hamilton — His Missionary Hardships — Andrew Taylor — Success of the Missions — Emigration — Financial Sufferings of the Conference — Liberality of the English — The Sacramental Controversy — Schism of the "Primitive Methodists" — Adam Averell — "Plan of Pacification" — Death of Averell — Adversities and Success of Irish Methodism — Death of Graham — Of Hamilton — Of Ouseley — Of other Itinerants.

The struggles and successes of Methodism in Ireland, during the days of Wesley, have already been narrated. He crossed the Channel forty-two times, making twenty-one visits to the island. He presided in all its Conferences, from 1756 to 1778, and, thenceforward until his death, attended their annual sessions alternately with Coke. There was no Conference in the year in which Wesley died; but for twenty-two years afterward Coke presided at all its sessions, except those of 1793, 1810, 1811, and 1812, which were presided over by John Crooks, the "Apostle of the Isle of Man," Adam Averell, and Adam Clarke. To no man, save Wesley, did early Irish Methodism owe greater obligations than to Thomas Coke. He visited the country oftener than Wesley. He lavished his money upon its suffering preachers and Churches. He traveled and preached in its towns and villages, procured protection from the civil administration for its itinerants against papal mobs, and was, in fine, practically more the Bishop of Irish than of American Methodism.

English Methodist preachers supplied Ireland for many years. During twelve years they were a majority of its itinerants. As late as thirty years after the introduction of Methodism into the island, the number of native preachers was but twelve; in 1777, however, they had the majority, and by 1796 there remained but two English itinerants among the eighty members of the Irish Conference. Ireland meanwhile gave to England some of its best evangelists, Thomas Walsh, Adam Clarke, Henry Moore, William Thompson, the first President of the British Conference after the death of Wesley, and many others.

Methodism advanced rapidly under Coke's frequent superintendence. In the year 1782, when he first presided in the Irish Conference, there were in the island no more than fifteen circuits, thirty-four preachers, and about six thousand members in society, with but few chapels. But in the year 1813, when he presided for the last time, the circuits, including eight missionary districts, which were established by him, amounted to fifty-six; the preachers, including the missionaries, were one hundred and twenty-one, and the members of the societies had increased to twenty-eight thousand seven hundred and seventy.[1]

The disturbances which followed the death of Wesley, on the sacramental question, did not seriously affect the Irish Conference. That question was inevitable, but awaited a later date, when it was to break out with hardly less calamitous effects than attended it in the sister island. But about the time that peace returned to the Connection in the latter, Irish Methodism was to struggle with the terrible evils of the memorable Irish Rebellion, the result of those anarchical tendencies, political and moral, which the French Revolution had spread over Europe, and which had so much exasperated the trials of English Methodism. The Papists organized secret societies; the "United Irishmen" became a formidable combination;[2] and for a time the Protestants of Ulster were inveigled into the treasonable scheme, chiefly by the agency of Theobald Wolf Tone, a professed Protestant, but a disciple of Thomas Paine. From 1795 the rebellious spirit rapidly spread till, about the end of 1797, the whole island was in agitation, and the next year the conspiracy exploded in desolating mobs and civil war. A French invasion was invited, and was attempted under the command of General Hubert. The horrors perpetrated, in the name of liberty, by this outbreak of commingled Popery and Infidelity can never be fully recorded.[3] The shrubberies were gleaned for pike-handles, the Catholic children were "marked," that they might be discriminated from those of Protestants in the massacres; infuriated priests instigated the mob; Protestants were piked at the altar, their houses were burned, and their farms devastated; leaves of Bibles were stuck on the top of pikes, and displayed, with Hibernian inappropriateness, as "the French colors;" preachers of the Gospel were imprisoned and murdered; signal-fires gleamed on the hills at night; tens of thousands of armed ruffians marched to and fro in the country, desolating it with fire and sword; thirty-seven thousand of them encamped near Ross, and on the next day seven thousand were slain on the field.

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[1] Smith's Hist. of Wes. Methodism in Ireland, p. 190. Dublin, 1830.

[2] Alison's Hist. of Europe, etc., vol. iv, p. 557.

Methodists, particularly Methodist itinerants, were, of course, objects of the special malignity of the rebels, for they were noted for their loyalty. Their societies were thrown into general confusion, their families scattered, and their preachers, traveling and local, hunted and imprisoned. George Taylor, one of the latter, was led into the Wexford prison, clothed in a soldier's ragged garment, without hat, neckcloth, or comfortable shoes. William Gurley, another Methodist prisoner, recognized him; they wept in each other's arms, and shared some food which was brought by the wife of Gurley. The rebels had stripped Taylor for his clothes, and had led him, arrayed in his military rags, to be shot. While in a line with other victims, ranged on their knees for execution, a proclamation arrived from the rebel commandant which saved him. He was, nevertheless, struck several times and stabbed by the disappointed insurgents, and at last led to prison. There he and Gurley prayed at night with their fellow-sufferers. The papist guards were affected by his piety and treated him with kindness; and when the hair of the prisoners was cut off, and "pitched caps" put upon their heads, he was spared that indignity, though it was imposed upon a clergyman of the Establishment, who became insane by his sufferings. Taylor was offered his liberty if he would join the rebel army, but he sternly refused, and was pinioned for his loyalty. He was separated at last from Gurley, but the latter kept up his prayer-meetings with the prisoners. "The number," he says, "of Protestants taken out, from time to time, to be put to death, caused my prayer-meetings, morning, noon, and evening, to be thronged; and after we were locked up at night we had prayers by ourselves in the cell." He adds "that a divine power attended these meetings, such as he never saw before; and several were enabled to believe with the heart, and to trust in a present Saviour, and were happy in their bonds. Some who hitherto had been lukewarm were now quickened and made alive in Christ, rejoicing in their Redeemer." The two Methodists were at last led forth with others to be murdered on a bridge and cast into the river. Gurley with others passed out and were received by the "murdering band." This was a company of insurgents who stood in two rows to take the victims as they left the prison. They were armed with pikes, which were red with the blood of those whom they had just murdered. They set up a shout: "Here comes Gurley, the heretic! Pike him! pike him! pike the heretic dog!" He heard his doom pronounced with the spirit of a martyr. "I felt," he says, "the moment the ruffian's hand was laid on my neck, the power of God come on my soul, and I was filled with unutterable joy. I had no doubt but that in a few minutes I should be with Jesus in paradise." They were conducted with curses and yells to the "bloody bridge." The prisoners, arranged in a row on their knees, awaited their fate. An eye-witness says: "Some they pierced in places not mortal, to prolong and increase their torture; others they raised aloft on their pikes, and while the victim writhed in agony, and his blood streamed down the handles of their pikes, they exulted round him with savage joy." "They piked six," says Taylor, "in the most horrid manner, and threw them over the bridge. One man in his torture jumped into the river, where they shot him. While these were tortured, I thought surely I would be one of the next, as there was only one between me and death, when the Lord appeared in our behalf."[4] The Romish priest of Wexford interfered and rescued them. Such is an example of the horrors of these times. The Irish Conference wrote to the British session of 1798: "Never did we expect to see so awful a day as we now behold! The scenes of carnage and desolation which open to our view in every part of the land are truly affecting; we cannot help crying, 'O God, shorten the day of our calamity, or no flesh can be saved!' To attempt a description of our deplorable state would be vain indeed. Suffice it to say, that loss of trade, breach of confidence, fear of assassination, towns burned, counties laid waste, houses for miles without an inhabitant, and the air tainted with the stench of thousands of carcasses, form some outline of the melancholy picture of our times. However, in the midst of this national confusion, we, and our people in general, blessed be God! have been wonderfully preserved; though some of us were imprisoned for weeks by the rebels, exposed also to fire and sword in the heat of battle, and carried (surrounded by hundreds of pikes) into the enemies' camp, and plundered of almost every valuable, yet we have not suffered the least injury in our persons. And, moreover, God, even our own God, has brought us through all, to see and embrace each other in this favored city. But while we bless God for our preservation, we have to lament that on the Carlow and Wicklow circuits, and several others, many societies have been scattered, and many of our people left without a place to lay their heads. This may, in some measure, account for the diminution of our numbers this year; yet we bless God that in other parts of the kingdom there has been an ingathering of souls, as well as a deepening of his work in the hearts of his people."

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[3] See Taylor's History of the Rebellion, etc.; Sir Richard Musgrave's Memoirs, etc.; and, for the sufferings of the Methodists particularly, Lanktree's Biog. Narrative, Reilly's Memoir of Ouseley, and Gurley's Memoir of Gurley. Gurley was a sufferer in some of the worst scenes of the Rebellion, and he witnessed some of its worst massacres; his brother and brother-in-law were murdered; he was himself imprisoned and brought out to be piked, but miraculously escaped death and went to America, where he died a Methodist preacher. His Memoir, by Rev. L. B. Gurley, was published in Cincinnati in 1856.

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[4] Gurley, chap. 15.

Irish Methodists justly boast of the loyalty and courage of their fathers in those terrible days. Preachers and laymen generally stood firm on the side of order, at the risk of all things. It is claimed that "Methodist loyalty" saved Dublin from being sacked. A Methodist citizen received secret word, from his brother in the country, that the rebels were about to precipitate themselves upon the capital. The information was communicated to the Lord-Lieutenant when no apprehension of the danger was entertained; preparations were immediately made, the cannon of the castle gave the alarm, and the drums beat to arms through the streets. During the night the troops left the city, met the rebel army near at hand, and defeated it. The authorities appreciated the fidelity of the denomination. Coke, who hastened to Ireland to encourage the Church in its struggles, obtained the protection of the Lord-Lieutenant for its preachers, and special permission for them to assemble, from all parts of the country, in Conference, at Dublin, at a time when all assemblages of more than five men, except the military, were prohibited. The itinerants held their session with closed doors and without a sentinel, in Whitefriar-street Church, during nearly three weeks, and, at its conclusion, had letters of permission and protection from the government to travel to their destinations throughout the country.[5] "We enjoy," wrote the Conference to its English brethren, "all the instituted and prudential ordinances, while in various parts houses of all denominations have been deserted." Lord Castlereagh was the chief secretary for Ireland at this time, and Alexander Knox, the old friend of Wesley, was his private secretary; Coke's influence with them, sustained by the good reputation of the Methodists, doubtless obtained these extraordinary favors.

This session of the Conference was rendered an epoch in Irish Methodism by the fact that it ordained the celebrated Irish Missions, providing preaching for the people in their native language. Coke proposed the measure, and pledged its pecuniary support. James M'Quigg and Charles Graham were appointed the first two missionaries.

M'Quigg is pronounced an eminent Irish scholar and an able preacher.[6] His health was soon prostrated by the labors of the mission; but he continued to promote it by editing the Irish Bible, under the direction of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which made honorable acknowledgement of his ability and services. He put the translation through a second edition, in Dublin, revising it by Bedel's original manuscript in the library of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and was preparing a stereotyped third edition, when he sank into the grave under his infirmities; but he has continued to live an effective life among his countrymen by the vernacular Scriptures, which have been scattered by thousands in all parts of the island, and have, in late years, been sapping the foundations of Irish Popery.

Charles Graham is still revered in Ireland as one of its chief Methodistic characters. Little is known of his early life, except that he was noted for his dauntless Irish spirit, and the leadership of his clan at their uproarious fairs and other gatherings. When more than twenty-five years of age the death of his mother induced in him religious thoughts. He was a Churchman, but could not find the guidance he needed from his parish minister. He thought he would try Popery; but its gross superstitions and the extortions of its priests soon repelled him. Some pious Protestants in Sligo, his native place, gave him instructions which encouraged him; but he still groped in darkness and difficulties till he heard the Methodist itinerants, who taught him to seek a present and free salvation. He obtained it, and forthwith began to publish it throughout his own and the adjacent counties. In 1790 Wesley found him, and commissioned him as a missionary evangelist in Kerry, the last county that received Methodism. He could speak the vernacular language—a rare qualification among the Wesleyan preachers, as most of them had hitherto been Englishmen. He did great service in the county of Kerry, where he is still venerated as its apostle. He began his mission in the streets of Milltown. Riding into the town, he asked a youth, "Do you know any one here that has a Bible and reads it?" "O yes," he was answered, "the clerk of the Church," to whose house he was directed. Riding up to the door he accosted the clerk, expressing the hope that, as he was accustomed to read the Bible, he would have no objection to a preacher of its truths. The man appeared astonished and confounded. "I read the Bible, sir! no, indeed, I never read it, unless what I read of it at church on Sunday." The application and the appearance of the missionary were not, however, without good effect on the man's mind. "Come in, sir; come in, sir," he at last said; "make my house your home while you remain." From being notorious for wickedness, he became a devoted Christian, the first fruit of Graham's mission to Kerry. He joined the Methodist society, his influence became considerable in the town and neighborhood, and he continued faithful unto death. Milltown was made the head of a circuit.[7]

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[5] "Centenary of Methodism." By the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society, ch. 13. Dublin, 1849.

[6] Reilly's Ouseley, ch. 6. New York, 1848.

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[7] Reilly's Ouseley, ch. 5.

Few of the Irish preachers had severer trials, from mobs, than Graham, but he courageously met and conquered them. He was often stoned, or overwhelmed by the pressure of the hostile crowd, or his voice drowned by their shouts; but if driven from any place it was only to return again, sometimes after repeated repulses, sometimes by the strangest opportunities. He was twice defeated in the streets of Tralee, (for his preaching was usually in the open air,) but in the third attempt he was successful. Two of the persecutors planned to silence him: one of them was to throw stones at him from behind a wall, while the other was to stand in the throng, observe the effect of the missiles. and direct the mob. The first stone, however, struck the accomplice in the crowd; he was borne to the hospital and died confessing his design. The persecution at Tralee was thus ended.

A singular but very useful Irishman was meanwhile doing great good in Ulster and Connaught, and many are the reminiscences of him still current among the Methodists of that region. Bartley Campbell was a genuine example of simple, ardent Irish character, a stout-hearted papist, and proverbially eccentric. Without any intercourse with Protestants he became profoundly awakened with anxiety for a better faith than popery had taught him. He called on his priest, who could not understand his difficulties. He said many prayers, submitted to severe penances, obtained absolution, but found no relief to his troubled conscience. He made a pilgrimage of forty Irish miles to St. Patrick's purgatory, at Loughbery, in Donegal county, where it was supposed all sins could be expiated. He went through the required ceremonies, and received absolution from the officiating priest; but his conscience was more disquieted than ever. Before he left he again applied to the priest. "Did not I give you absolution?" asked the latter. "You did, father." "And do you deny the authority of the Church?" "By no means; but my soul is in misery. What shall I do?" "Do!" said the priest, "why go to bed and sleep." "Sleep!" exclaimed the awakened man, "no, father; perhaps I may awake in hell." The priest threatened him with the horsewhip, then no unusual means of pastoral discipline among Irish papists; the penitent hastened to a retired place, threw himself on the ground, and with tears and groans prayed for light from God. There he found peace in believing, for his struggling mind caught the idea of salvation by Christ alone. He returned to the numerous "pilgrims" who were performing their prescribed penances, scores of commingled men and women creeping with their bared and bleeding knees upon the rough path toward the "purgatory." He exhorted them to seek God through Christ, assuring them that they should obtain peace of mind, as he had. The priest was alarmed and drove him from the place, but only to spread his testimony the farther. Bartley Campbell was afterward known among his neighbors as "The Pilgrim of Loughbery." Among priests and people he now became a witness for the true "cure" of the soul, as he called his own experience; he exhorted them in private and in public, sometimes amid riotous opposition; and he was "so successful," says an Irish writer, as to entitle him "to some place in a record which is intended to exhibit the power of our holy Christianity on the native Irish." He was a favorite with Coke. When the latter approached the county, Campbell, mounting his plow-horse, "his saddle covered with rough goat-skin," would ride off with an escort to meet him, as county or city officials honor judges of assize. He accompanied or heralded him from place to place, stirring up the population to turn out and hear him; nor could a more striking contrast well be conceived than that which was presented between the doctor and his attendant. The coming of Coke at that time was considered as the visit of some celestial messenger. Campbell, on these occasions, would be among the foremost in the cavalcade. Henry Moore admired his simple but devout character, and says that "he had a strong understanding, and great ardency of spirit: and as he perfectly understood the Irish language, he became a means of great good to the poor people of the communion he had left. When I was stationed in Dublin, forty years ago, he walked from his distant dwelling, about a hundred English miles, to see me; and I rejoiced for all the good that he had received from the Lord, and also for what he had been enabled to do for his good Master. He gave me an account of the work in those parts near the place where he lived. I admired the grace of God which was in him, considering his uncultivated mind, and was amused with some of his strong expressions. He could not be satisfied with any meeting where there were none convinced of sin, or enabled to rejoice in God, as blotting out their sins; he used to call such a meeting a 'sham fight.' So it is that 'the Lord still chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and base things, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh may glory in his sight.'"[8] Such men, among the humblest class of the people, restrained and guided by the peculiar discipline of Methodism, have always been, as we have seen, important agents of its promotion, and Bartley Campbell was now one of its real though unenrolled Irish missionaries.

The most eminent of these evangelists was Gideon Ouseley, a name which has been almost a synonym of Irish Methodism during more than half a century. He was born in 1762, at Dunmore, in the county of Galway. His family is distinguished in the military, diplomatic, and literary history of England.[9] The eldest son of the house, his ambition might have aspired to the distinction which several of his kindred have attained; but he chose to seek "the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and to cast his lot among the humble, but heroic evangelists, who, as he deemed, were accomplishing the noblest work for his country, and "the trial of whose faith being much mor precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried wit fire," will be found unto higher "praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." He had received a classical education. His youth was "bold, generous, and intrepid." From his childhood he was subject to strong religious impressions, but found no suitable guidance to his inquiring spirit for many years. "Lord, help me! What shall I do? Who will teach me?" were the frequent cries of his conscience amid the spiritual death which prevailed around him. In 1789 the Methodist itinerants penetrated to Dunmore; he heard them, and his awakened soul approved their message. The next year he attended their assemblies habitually, and in deep anguish sought "the peace of God," which he there heard offered "without money and without price." He found it, and spent the remainder of his long life in proclaiming it to his countrymen. He received Wesley's definition of sanctification, and became a practical example of the doctrine. His ardent but enlightened mind now saw so distinctly the comparative importance of temporal and eternal things, that, renouncing the conventional prejudices of his social position, and the ordinary aims of life, he consecrated himself to the humblest Christian labors, resolved to sacrifice the transient present for the eternal future. He began to preach among his neighbors, and was soon proclaiming the Gospel from town to town in his own and adjacent counties, an apostolic evangelist. Of course no little interest was excited by so singular an example in "high life." The people heard him with wonder. He preached in season and out of season; his first sermon was in a church-yard, at a funeral, an occasion which he often chose as peculiarly favorable for deep impressions of the truth. "He not only preached," says his biographer, "and exhorted in the streets and church-yards, fairs and markets, but was accustomed to attend the wake-houses, or places where the dead lay; there he would mingle with the crowds who were collected for the purpose of 'hearing mass;' and while the priest read the prayers in Latin, not one word of which the people could understand, he would translate every part that was good into Irish, and then address the whole assembly, in the presence of the priest, on their eternal interests; preaching to them Jesus, and salvation in his name. One instance of this kind will answer to illustrate his manner of proceeding. He one day rode up to a house where the priest was celebrating mass; the large assembly were on their knees; Ouseley knelt with them, and, rendering into Irish every word that would bear a Scriptural construction, he audibly repeated it, adding, 'Listen to that!' They were deeply affected; the priest was thunderstruck; and all were ready to receive whatever he might say. Service being ended, the congregation rose to their feet; he then delivered an exhortation on the need of having their peace made with God, of being reconciled to him, submitting to the doctrine of reconciliation by real penitence, and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When he had concluded, they cried out to the priest, 'Father, who is that?' 'I don't know,' replied the priest, 'he is not a man at all, he is an angel; no man could do what he has done.' Ouseley mounted his horse and rode away, followed by the blessings of the multitude. This instance will show, that however desultory the manner, there was method in all his proceedings, exactly agreeing with the state of society as he found it, and better adapted to the circumstances and prejudices of the people than any set form of ministration could possibly have been; and, as frequently appeared, great blessings accompanied the word, thus bought home to the wants and hearts of multitudes."

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[8] Life of Moore, p. 61

[9] General Sir Ralph Ouseley was the brother of the Methodist itinerant; Sir William and Sir George Ouseley, the Orientalists, were his cousins and schoolmates.

Such was the man who was to be, for many years, the chief Methodist evangelist among the Irish. Throughout the province of Connaught, and as far as Leinster, he pursued these labors during about seven years before his name appeared in the Minutes, exhorting in Dunmore and neighboring villages, at fairs, funerals, and other occasions on week days, and on Saturday riding to places twenty miles or more distant, and preaching three or four times on Sunday. "The wisdom and goodness of God," says his biographer, "may be perceived in thus raising up, in the darkest part of Ireland, such an instrument to enlighten the myriads around him who 'sat in the region of the shadow of death,' in the lowest state of moral and spiritual destitution, and fitting him by such extraordinary gifts for the work for which he sent him forth; a work which had been, alas! long neglected and forgotten by the Christian world—the preaching to the people of Ireland, in their own tongue, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'"

Graham and Ouseley traveled together in their missionary adventures, and stirring scenes were witnessed by them in the fields, the market-places, and the fairs, where they usually preached sitting on horseback, sometimes amid showers of stones, potatoes, rotten eggs, and bludgeons; at others amid weeping and praying multitudes. A preacher who witnessed their labors wrote to Coke: "The mighty power of God accompanied their word with such demonstrative evidence as I have never known, or indeed rarely heard of. I have been present in fairs and markets while these two blessed men of God, with burning zeal and apostolic ardor, pointed hundreds and thousands to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And I have seen the immediate fruit of their labor: the aged and the young falling prostrate in the most public places of concourse, cut to the heart, and refusing to be comforted until they knew Jesus and the power of his resurrection. I have known scores of these poor penitents to stand up and witness a good confession; and, blessed be God! hundreds of them now adorn the Gospel of Christ Jesus. These two men have been the most indefatigable in their labors of love to perishing sinners of any that I have yet known. From four to six hours they would preach, exhort, and pray; and next day, perhaps, ride a journey, and encounter the same difficulties."

They went into the worst moral fields of the the country; not to the circuits occupied by their brethren, but to the darkest and strongest holds of popery. They appeared in the localities of the late Rebellion, and it is recorded that the rocks and glens, which had resounded with the clamor of arms and the roar of cannon, now echoed the joyful sound of the Gospel; that in the streets which had flowed with blood, the villages which had been devastated by tumults and carnage, were now assembled tattered and famished thousands, listening, some with bigoted gaze, others with tears, all with curious astonishment, to the strange men who, sitting on their horses, were crying aloud, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!" Their message delivered in one town, they hastened forward to another, preaching often three, four, or five times a day. As they spoke in the open air, seldom dismounting their horses, they wore black skull-caps for protection against the atmosphere. These became a sort of badge, and they were soon known throughout the country as the "preaching black caps." On entering a town, the Bible in hand, and their hats off, processions of the people followed them to some convenient place, where, turning the heads of their horses toward the gathering multitudes, they sang a translation of one of Charles Wesley's hymns. The characteristic pathos of the lyric, and perhaps still more the pathos of the language, touched the hearts of the rude crowds, and their tears were often flowing before the prayer was begun. The brief but fervent supplication was so uttered that all heard it, some standing and crossing themselves, some on their knees smiting on their breasts. It echoed down the neighboring streets and through the habitations, the inmates of which were startled at the unwonted sound of public prayer in their native speech, and ran out to swell the assembly. One of the missionaries, proclaiming a text in both English and Irish, preached a short but powerful sermon; the other followed with an exhortation. Their discourses were mostly in Irish, but were often interspersed with English passages, urgent appeals to such in the crowd as understood only English. They frequently illustrated their sermons by hymns in Irish, which they sung, while the multitude sobbed aloud or waved to and fro, swayed by the simple music. The scenes usually presented by these vast assemblies were characteristically Irish. While some of the hearers were weeping, and others, on their knees, were calling upon the Virgin and the saints, some were shouting questions or defiance to the preachers, others throwing sticks or stones at them, some rolling up their sleeves in defense of, others in hostility to them. Frequently the confusion culminated in a genuine Hibernian riot, the parties rushing pell-mell upon each other, roaring, and brandishing shillelahs, and brought to order at last only by the intervention of troops from the barracks. Whatever doubts such occasional tumults might suggest, respecting the expediency of the mission, they were borne down by its triumphant results. The Gospel was heard by the Irish masses. How otherwise, Ouseley continually and unanswerably asked, can they be reached? They will not come to your Protestant churches, they believe it a sin to do so; their priests will not allow them to come. Shall they be left to perish? You cannot conduct your elections, or, in many instances, administer the laws among these people, without tumult; do you argue that government therefore should be abandoned? Shall not the administrators of the Gospel have courage to confront the indignities and perils which the magistrates face? It was seen too, that, with the occasional disorders, incalculable good was done. Not only scores, not only hundreds, but thousands of the wretched population were converted and brought into the Protestant Churches. These brave itinerants were evidently grappling with the monster evil of the land. They were doing what Protestantism had hitherto failed to do. Protestants generally began to see that there was no alternative, if popery was ever to be conquered. Many of the clergy of the Establishment therefore took sides with them, and welcomed them to their parishes; and in the occasional mobs, Protestants of all denominations stood faithfully around them. Their dead fellow-laborer, M'Quigg, was still abroad with them in his Irish Bible. Thousands of copies were scattered among the papists. Ouseley wrote an able volume, entitled "Old Christianity and Papal Novelties," which was circulated everywhere. The priests could not refute its conclusive arguments, for its author was an educated man, and an adept in the controversy. Many popish laymen, popish school-masters, and even candidates for the priesthood, were converted by it, and not a few such converts became preachers in the Conference or in the Established Church. Besides, Ouseley was an Irish gentleman. His family was influential. His father sided with him, for one of the converts of the son, becoming a preacher, had been instrumental in the conversion of the aged squire himself. The wonderful missionary had therefore a prestige which commanded respect among his countrymen. Without bravado, he was evidently a heroic man, and courage irresistibly commands admiration. Not one in ten thousand would dare to do what he was doing. While, as a well-bred man, he was fitted for the better circles of Irish life, he had an extraordinary ability to adapt himself to the common people. He was not only eloquent in the use of their vernacular tongue, but understood their prejudices, and shared their characteristic humor. In his public discourses he could not be surprised or embarrassed by their interpellations or wit. He would hold colloquies with them in the course of his sermons, and with so much adroitness and good-humor as to extort their concession or compel the interlocutor to slink away abashed into the crowd. His sincere reverence for "the blessed Virgin" procured him, it is said, many a respectful hearing. Allusions in his sermons to her and the Scripture saints often secured reverent attention, without compromising his Protestantism. His Popish hearers were seldom scandalized at anything in his services except the omission of the

"Hail Mary," after the final prayer; but he parried their objections usually with successful tact. As he was about retiring after one of his sermons, a hearer shouted: "You have forgotten the 'Hail Mary;' why didn't you say the 'Hail Mary?'" "How dare you speak so disrespectfully of the blessed Virgin!" he replied with much emphasis; "you are very impertinent. How dare you?" a reproof "which seemed to meet with universal approbation."[1] Without provoking the prejudices of his hearers, he nevertheless treated them with a courage and frankness which, while it might seem to challenge their hostility, only challenged their admiration and good-humor. In a town filled with Romanists he hired the bellman, as was his custom, to announce through the streets preaching for the evening. The man, afraid of opposition, uttered the announcement timidly and indistinctly. Ouseley, passing in the street, heard him, and taking the bell, rang it himself, proclaiming aloud: "This is to give you notice that Gideon Ouseley, the Irish missionary, is to preach this evening in such a place, and at such an hour. *And I am the man myself!*"

The mission, encouraged by the Protestant community, notwithstanding its startling incidents and formidable difficulties, gained strength continually. The Conference saw that it was opening a new and grand field of evangelization before them, and gave it their heartiest interest. Ouseley and Graham, who had traversed the whole land together for six years, with marvelous success, were sent into separate fields. William Hamilton, one of the leading members of the Conference, was appointed the colleague of Ouseley. He was the first preacher who had encouraged Ouseley's extraordinary plan of labor, inducing the Conference to sanction it, and to enroll the missionary on their Minutes. Hamilton had superior talents; he was an effective preacher, singularly calm himself, but as singularly powerful over the passions of his hearers. His thoughts were original and often humorous; his arguments ingenious and irresistible; his style simple; the effect of his discourses sometimes magical. He worked with his might. Ouseley declared that he "never saw a more indefatigable laborer." After being ten years in the mission, he speaks with a just exultation of its hardships and its success. Never, he says, has he had sounder sleep than after preaching three or four times during the day on horseback, amid noisy thousands of Papists, some weeping, others shouting menaces. And this sweet sleep was often in habitations which were less comfortable than those that entertained even the American frontier itinerants. The narrow kitchen was sometimes the cow-house, preaching house, dining-room and bed-chamber. If there was a separate bedroom, he had to "pick his steps going to bed, for the wet." The "dog would come through the hole of the wall," and lie down beyond him, while the sow and her litter lay beneath the bed. "But," he adds, "the blessing of God was with us; the conversion of many of the Papists made up for all our troubles."

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[1] Life of Rev. Fossey Tackaberry, chap. 1. London, 1860.

Andrew Taylor, who, like George Taylor, had suffered bravely at Wexford, in the late Rebellion, was added to the band of missionaries. He could not speak the Irish language, but did good service, especially in the most memorable localities of the Rebellion, for his perils and courage had given him a prestige which commanded the popular interest. When a prisoner the rebel captains had liberated him five or six times, for they admired his courage and frankness. "Who are you?" he was asked by a pikeman. To have replied that he was a Protestant would have been hazardous; to have acknowledged himself a Methodist would have been still more dangerous; to confess himself a Methodist preacher was an extreme peril; but to deny either would be false. "I am a Methodist preacher," he exclaimed. "Ay," responded the rebel, struck with reverence at his intrepidity, "you wouldn't tell a lie," and turned away. But he was at last taken and led out to execution; his escape from death on the "bloody bridge" seemed a miracle. The fame of his heroism spread generally; "he was everywhere received as an angel of God,' and his ministry is said to have been "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Additions were rapidly made to the missionary corps. In 1826 there were no less than twenty-one men designated to this irregular work. The Missionary Report of that year testifies that they had much direct success, and were diffusing the Holy Scriptures "through a considerable part of the population." Small societies were "raised up in various places, which were as lights of example and doctrine in the surrounding darkness." Meanwhile the circuits and many Protestant Churches, including the Establishment, received frequent reinforcements from Popery through the instrumentality of the missionaries. So important has this scheme of labor been found, that in our day nearly one fourth of the effective preachers of the Irish Conference are "Irish missionaries." The field has been a difficult one; few others, in any civilized nation, have presented more formidable discouragements; but the evangelists have shown invincible perseverance. And those great moral changes which are now redeeming Ireland, and by which, notwithstanding the tenacious hold of Popery on her popular masses, she has nevertheless become the scene of surprising religious awakenings, are largely indebted to the persistent struggles of her Wesleyan itinerant missionaries, to M'Quigg's Bible, and Ouseley's apostleship of forty years. The biographer of the latter, himself personally active in the religious progress of his country for many years, ascribes, in no small degree, "the present state of religious society in Ireland to the unwearied exertions of this distinguished man, 'who fought the battles orally and with his pen when others were yet supine.'"[2] Ouseley anticipated most of those means of evangelization which have, in late years, been used so successfully by the Protestant bodies of the island. Not only did ne and M'Quigg scatter the vernacular Scriptures among the Papal masses, but he gave them the most successful popular treatises on the errors of Popery. He suggested the plan of Bible readers, which has become one of the most effective means of spreading Protestantism. He sketched the scheme, urged it on the attention of the Missionary Committee, and pledged from his own resources £50 a year for its support. Ten persons were employed to travel among the villages, and "instruct the people, out of the Scriptures, in the first principles of religion." Mission schools were also established on a large scale, and as the teachers were mostly exhorters or local preachers, they at last superseded the "Bible readers," by doing the work of the latter more effectively. His plans were so successful that "generally he was hailed by the nobility, clergy, and gentry, and encouraged in his important labors." By the co-operation of other Protestant Churches, combined in the "Irish Society" for the evangelization of the country, extraordinary results were witnessed in many places. A "singular movement" occurred in the district of Kings Court, where the peasantry had been reading, or hearing read, the vernacular Scriptures. A number of the Papal masters and pupils of the schools passed resolutions declaring, over their signatures, in behalf of them selves and five thousand of their adult brethren, their determination to favor the reading of the Scriptures in their own tongue, believing "that they are the source of all spiritual knowledge, and the proper basis of all moral instruction," and that "the want of them in their native language has been to them and their forefathers, for a long period, the greatest evil." Another paper, signed by more than three thousand Papists, from five neighboring counties, was afterward published, asserting that the "Irish peasantry are most anxious for scriptural knowledge for themselves and their children; and that there are thousands of Roman Catholics who, from sincere love for scriptural education, continue, in defiance of every species of hostility, to send their children to Bible schools." Still later it was announced that forty thousand persons at least were being taught to read the Irish Scriptures in this district, and more than double that number were constantly hearing them in their cabins. Numerous instances of the renunciation of Popery interested the public attention throughout the nation. In some counties they were reported by the hundred at a time. "There appears," wrote Ouseley, "to be a movement of men's minds, in some degree, all over the country." Through ever recurring opposition, this movement has continued to advance, and it is hardly now a contingent calculation that Ireland, after so many struggles and sufferings, will yet, and before many years, be one of the most fertile fields of Protestant Christianity. In that day Ouseley, M'Quigg, Graham, Hamilton, Taylor, and their fellow-laborers will not fail to be recognized as among the chief apostles of Irish evangelization.

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[2] Reilly's Ouseley, ch. 14.

Such labors, together with the hardly less energetic exertions of the regular circuit preachers, would have rendered Methodism mighty in the island, had it not been for continual emigration to the New World. The Irish itinerants were virtually laboring for American Methodism. While they were thus doing good service to the common cause of the denomination, their own Conference suffered severely. The returns of their members of society often showed, in prosperous years, a decrease of thousands. In fifteen years, from 1824 to 1839, no less than ten thousand left the country.[3] Entire societies and congregations have sometimes been thus dissolved. Hosts of their converts were in this manner transferred to their American brethren, and their financial resources were almost constantly embarrassed by the loss. The British Conference, however, after supplying them for years with men, liberally supplied them with money. As early as the year of the Rebellion, during which the Irish preachers suffered extremely, the British Conference unanimously voted that all their "temporal deficiencies should be supplied before any of their own were mentioned." In 1801, however, the English Conference was compelled to borrow money for its own deficiencies, and none could be spared for the Irish preachers. Coke went to their relief; an Irish Book Room was founded as a means of income, and £1,200 were subscribed for the purpose. The institution was of important public utility, but yielded little or no financial advantage to the ministry. Money had to be borrowed on the credit of the Conference; but this course soon overwhelmed it with such debts that it resolved to borrow no more. It owed £8,000, the interest of which absorbed nearly the whole amount of its Annual Society Collection for the supply of the ministerial deficits. The preachers resolved to tax themselves for the liquidation of the debt. Poor as they were, they subscribed in 1805 more than £600; and year after year they continued to impoverish themselves for the relief of the Conference. In 1818, after losing many of their wealthiest people, by the schism which followed the sacramental controversy, they subscribed more than £1,200. During sixteen years they staggered under their hardly supportable fiscal burdens, laboring meantime with unslackened devotion for the salvation of their benighted country. Their sufferings touched the hearts of English Methodists, and from 1818 to 1825 both preachers and people sent them liberal aid. In 1826 the British Conference resolved to grant them an annual sum of £600 from its Contingent Fund. In 1828 the Irish preachers pledged £10 each toward the debt of the Conference, which still amounted to £8,000. The self-sacrificing act was done with characteristic generosity; the few among them who had any property gave it lavishly, some £20, £50, or £100 each. In one hour £1,850 were subscribed—a munificent contribution from the preachers to their people. The latter could not resist the example, and by the Conference of the next year more than £7,200 were subscribed. Justly said a witness of the subscriptions of the poor and self-sacrificing preachers in the Conference: "Surely there is not such another body of men in the world!"[3] When we consider the peculiar difficulties of their field of labor, the poverty of their societies, the formidable barbarism which Popery had imposed upon the Celtic population, the popular tumults and rebellion, the wretched accommodations of the itinerants, and the continual drain upon their congregations by foreign emigration, and yet their persistent labors and success, it may indeed be doubted whether the energy of Irish Methodism has had a parallel in the history of the denomination. And its blessings, not only to America, but to the Wesleyan Foreign Missions, and to England itself, in the gift of many eminent preachers, entitle it to the grateful admiration of the whole Methodist world.

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[3] Jackson's Centenary, chap. 6.

It had to endure, meantime, other and more deplorable trials. The sacramental controversy, which had periled British Methodism so seriously, did not for many years affect Ireland. The English Conference had entirely emerged from it, before the Irish Methodists began to take any considerable interest in the question. They declined to act on the English Plan of Pacification as not necessary to them. The visits of Coke, and his rapid journeys over the island, afforded them the sacraments frequently in their chapels, and at other times they were still content to resort to the churches of the Establishment. An able clergyman, Adam Averell, early joined the Conference, and administered among them the sacramental rites. He was of a highly respectable family. Religiously inclined from his childhood, and encouraged by his relative, Dr. Averell, Lord-Bishop of Limerick, he studied in the Irish University for the Established Church, and had begun his ministerial career when the progress of Methodism in Athlone, where he resided and acted as chief magistrate of the borough, excited the hostility of Churchmen. A curate urged him o preach against the "new sect;" but he knew nothing of its doctrines, and his own candid and devout temper would not allow him to assail it till he should ascertain them from its own writings. He procured Wesley's "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," and closed it a Methodist at heart.[4] "Is it possible," he said, "that these are the doctrines of a people that all the world is speaking against—the very doctrines of our Reformation that God has revealed to me so often while upon my knees before him?" He now preached with increased fervor; he attended a Methodist class-meeting, and soon after formed one among his own people; he introduced a Methodist preacher to them; he began to extend his labors in various directions, and at last preached in the open air. He was attacked by mobs; he escaped providentially from assassins; he had, in fine, become a "revivalist," an itinerant, a Methodist preacher. He met Coke, and was inspired by his example. He went to Dublin in 1796, and attended, for the first time, the Methodist Conference. It received him to membership without probation, as he was already in holy orders. With Coke he visited England, and an interview with Mary Fletcher, at Madeley, confirmed his affection for his new brethren. "To me," he wrote, "it was more than classic ground, as long the residence of one of the greatest and holiest men of his time, whose pious instructions and godly example still imbue the hearts and shine in the lives of many of the inhabitants of the parish." Returning to Ireland, he went abroad traveling and preaching during the terrors of the Rebellion; he was arrested by soldiers, but being released, continued to traverse the country, laboring with no small success. He gave his money liberally for the erection of chapels and the relief of the suffering preachers; he aided the Conference materially in its struggles to emancipate itself from debt; he assisted Coke in founding the Irish Book Room; he traveled with Ouseley and Graham in their missionary excursions, and was appointed often the representative of the Irish Conference to the English Conference. In 1810 he was elected President of the Irish Conference, Coke, who usually presided, having failed to arrive. In 1814 he was again honored with that distinction, no one besides Coke and himself having occupied the chair for more than a score of years, except John Crook and Adam Clarke.

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[3] William Smith's Consecutive History, etc., of Methodism in Ireland. Book 4.

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[4] Centenary of Methodism, etc., ch. 11. Dublin, 1839. Memoir of Rev. Adam Averell, by Alex. Stewart and George Revington, ch. 2. Dublin, 1848.

Adam Averell was, in fine, one of the most important characters of Irish Methodism, and he deserved the public regard which was accorded him. His social position doubtless gave him much of his influence; but he was a man of excellent talents and of good education, and made great sacrifices, and endured no little persecution for the Connection. He was a faithful laborer, his piety was fervent, and his usefulness as an evangelist considerable. He had become conspicuous among the leading Methodists of the United Kingdom. He was now to take a new position in their history as the chief founder of a new Methodist body. In the Conference of 1814 he was alarmed, as its president, by the urgent petitions of the people for the administration of the sacraments by their own preachers. As a Churchman and an ordained clergyman he held tenaciously to Wesley's opinions in favor of the Establishment. He and his party contended that Wesley designed that the Methodists should ever continue to resort to the national Churches for the sacraments. His error was that he mistook a desire of Wesley for a design. Wesley patiently endured the ungenerous treatment of his people and himself by the Establishment; he died hoping that the policy of the Church would be modified, that the influence of Methodism itself would change it. He predicted that Methodism would either reform the Church or result in a separation from it. He recommended patience to his followers; but admitted that they should deviate from the Establishment whenever a deviation was really necessary for the work which God had devolved upon them.[5] He set them the example of such deviations; he ordained preachers himself, not only for America and Scotland, where the jurisdiction of the Establishment could not interfere, but also for England. He did not indeed usually observe the ritual forms of ordination, for these he deemed were human forms and not essential; but, approving them as decent ceremonies, he waived them only to avoid unnecessary offense to the prejudices of Churchmen, and was prepared to adopt them whenever they should be expedient. As early as the Conference of 1746, more than forty years before his death, he expressly declared as a reason for not using them, "that it is not expedient to *make haste;* we desire barely to follow Providence as it gradually opens."[6] He ordained at least twenty of his preachers. Few great reformers in history have more nobly broken away from the prejudices of tradition and education than John Wesley, and fewer have shown more of that practical wisdom which, while rising above such prejudices, knows how to guard against any unnecessary shock to them in the minds of others. The British Conference acted in perfect accordance with his example, both in refusing the sacraments to its people, as long as the necessity could be postponed, and in allowing them when they could no longer be denied. It had become expedient for the Irish Conference to follow the example of its British brethren. It had declined, at preceding sessions, the petitions of many of its people. It could decline them no longer without serious injury to its societies. Evidently the change must sooner or later be inevitable, and further delay could only occasion evil. The course of Averell and his followers had many plausibilities; it was thoroughly honest, but as thoroughly mistaken, and few candid readers who have traced Wesley's opinions in the preceding pages can deny that it has no sanction in his writings or his policy.

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[5] He says as his rule on the subject: "Put these two principles together: first, I will not separate from the Church; yet, secondly, *in cases of necessity* I will vary from it." Works, vol. vii, p. 279, English edition.

[6] See vol. i, book iii, chap. 5.

The Irish Conference of 1814 voted in favor of the change, but to conciliate the opponents of the measure, it imitated the forbearance of the English Conference, and postponed the operation of the vote for one year. At the session of 1815 it was still farther suspended, an address was issued to appease the petitioners, and Averell was authorized to travel among the societies and supply them with the sacraments in their own chapels. In the Conference of 1816, under the presidency of Adam Clarke, a Plan of Pacification was adopted for "the matter had become so serious as to threaten a division in the body."[7] This plan allowed the sacraments only in such places as the Conference should specify. Eight circuits were named. Thereafter two thirds of the stewards and leaders of a circuit must vote for their administration before the Conference would concede them; two thirds of the trustees, stewards, or leaders of any chapel must vote for them before a preacher, even on a circuit to which they had been accorded, could administer them within its walls. The superintendents of circuits had exclusive power to administer them; other preachers could only assist him. No preacher was allowed to agitate the question, for or against the claim of the people, and for the publication of any circular, letter, or pamphlet on either side, a preacher could be put back on probation in the Conference, or if he were but a probationer, be suspended. It was also voted that the administration of the eucharist should not be allowed in any Methodist chapel on the day in which it was administered in the national Church in the same place. Such were the precautions with which the Conference gradually yielded to the change demanded. During twenty years it had refused petitions for the sacraments. Many of its people, especially in the north, had been Dissenters, and could not be induced to go to the Established Church for these Christian rites. "The painful crisis has arrived," it declares in its Address to the Societies; "the Conference, after having long struggled against the cries and importunities of thousands of its spiritual children, is driven to this awful alternative—to comply with their requisition, or to lose them entirely." The address proceeds to say that, submitting to an imperative necessity, the Conference nevertheless submits the whole provision to the elective will of a large majority of the constitutional authorities of not only each circuit, but of each chapel, thereby devolving the responsibility of all future deviations upon the people or their representatives, the leaders, stewards, and trustees. It would be difficult to cite, from the whole history of the denomination, a more exemplary instance of moderation, or a more equitable adjustment of a controverted question. Sixty-two members of the Conference voted for the measure, and only twenty-four against it.

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[7] Irish Minutes for 1816.

But its opponents in the societies arrayed themselves decidely against it. Pamphlets and printed circulars were numerously issued on both sides. Committees for and against it were organized. More than seven thousand five hundred members were united in a schism in the year following the Conference. A meeting of official members among the dissentients was held at Clones, and initiated an independent system of itineracy. Twenty-six chapels were wrested from the Connection, and some of them were subjected to expensive suits in Chancery. The laws, however, sustained the rights of the Connection. Committees of laymen, in favor of the Conference, were formed at Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, and other places. The Dungannon committee, presided over by Shillington, a conspicuous layman, did important service, and received the express thanks of the session of 1818. Averell was applied to by the dissentients to organize them more effectively. He addressed a circular letter to the preachers, calling upon them to co-operate with him in "replacing Methodism on its original basis in Ireland." Not one of them joined him at the time; and out of the one hundred and thirty-four members of the Conference only one, besides Averell, subsequently left it for the new movement. Amid the passions of the controversy, they found it difficult to account charitably for some of those inconsistencies in his conduct which honest men often commit in times of agitation and confusion. They remembered that on the morning after the vote in favor of the sacraments, at the session of 1816, he came into the Conference, and standing up, while the tears ran down his cheeks, exclaimed: "I cannot leave these men, for I know not where to find any like them."[8] As he had received only deacon's orders in the Established Church, he had no authority to consecrate the sacraments; yet he had administered them generally among the Methodists, but was now deserting them for allowing their preachers to imitate his own example.

Several circuits had been formed in the North and South on the "old plan." A convention was held in Dublin, Januray 5, 1818, and "The General Principles of the Methodist Constitution" were adopted.[9] Another and more general convention was held at Clones on the twenty-seventh of the same month, which unanimously ratified the General Principles. A Conference met at Dublin the next month, and adopted the Principles as the Discipline of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists. Thus originated an Irish body of "Primitive Methodists," which has continued to our day, and which is quite distinguishable, both by the history of its origin and by its ecclesiastical principles, from the English body that bears the same title. They consider themselves to be a society, not a Church; they do not allow their preachers to administer the sacraments, and they admit laymen to their Conferences. At their Conference of 1819 they reported fifty-three preaching-houses; in 1836 these had increased to the number of one hundred and seven. The approved deed for their chapels forbids their ever departing from their original principles by the administration of the sacraments, or by becoming dissenters from the Established Church. By any such departure the offending society forfeits its chapel to the crown, to be used "as charitable property, or otherwise, as his majesty, his heirs and successors may think proper." They established a bi-monthly magazine, founded a Book Room, and formed a Home Missionary Society.[10] Their growth, numerically, has not been satisfactory. In 1819 they reported more than twelve thousand members.[11] In 1830 they had advanced but about two thousand. In the centenary year (1839) they reported less than sixteen thousand. They have rapidly declined since, and now return fewer members than they had at their origin.[12]

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[8] Biographical Narrative of Matthew Lanktree, p. 394. Belfast, 1836.

[9] General Principles, etc., p. 7. Dublin, 1818.

Averell continued to labor faithfully for them till his death, in 1847. He contributed liberally to their funds, and exemplified among them a devout life till, in his ninety-third year, he departed to his rest. His piety beautified, as with sunset hues, his last days, and the infirmities of extreme age could not mar his religious consolation. "Looking unto Jesus" was now his favorite text. "The blessed Jesus!" he exclaimed as he was stepping into the shadow of death; "one look at him is worth all the world!" "O thank God! I feel my soul happy in God! He is perfecting his work in me, and I can rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in all things give thanks! I can tell, from experience, that the Lord is the Lord God, merciful and gracious!" "Holy! holy! holy!" were his last audible words.

The secession exasperated greatly the peculiar sufferings of the Conference. Their financial trials were fearfully augmented, not only by the loss of many of their wealthiest laymen, but by expenses in the courts for the recovery of their chapels. The pious Ouseley wrote indignantly respecting these calamities. "Our chapels," he said, "are in some places broken open and rifled; the preachers in some places ill used, their furniture taken, and their families turned out into the streets, and all this by men calling themselves 'Primitive Methodists!'"[13] Methodism was tested by these trials in Ireland, as it had been by similar sufferings in England. The invincible fidelity of the Conference proved its vigor, and gave assurance of its future. Clarke, Reece, Bunting, Watson, Newton, and similar leaders in England, encouraged it by frequent visits to its Conference sessions. Its own strong men became stronger. Its missionaries, Ouseley, Reilly, his faithful companion and biographer, Graham, Hamilton, and their associates, labored more energetically than ever to recruit the ranks of its membership. Thomas Waugh became a leader in its affairs, "the Bunting of Ireland." Its losses were great by the schism, and afterward greater by emigration; but it repaired them by its unslackened energy. During four years of the controversy it reported an annual decrease of members—in 1817 no less a loss than seven thousand five hundred; but in the year 1819 the increase was more than three thousand five hundred. In the centenary year of Methodism it embodied more than twenty six thousand members, and more than a hundred and fifty traveling preachers. In several subsequent years it lost thousands by the increased emigration, which became a sort of national exodus toward America; and it seemed at times that the movement must sap the very foundations of Irish Methodism. But prosperity again returned, and through its long and unparalleled struggles it has shown an ever recuperative vitality. In 1839 it contributed £14,500 to the Centenary Fund. Its liberality, under its extreme poverty, has been one of the marvels of Methodist history. Its missions have been vigorously sustained, and have led, as we have seen, to those now general Protestant labors which are undermining popery in Ireland. Its schools are numerous and effective. In Dublin, Cork, Belfast, and other places it has erected some of the noblest chapels anywhere possessed by the denomination. In the metropolis it has established a large "Connectional Seminary;" and, aided munificently by American Methodists, who owe so much to it, it has projected a collegiate institution on an ample scale. In our day, after continual losses during successive years of the emigrant movement, it is again advancing, and reports nearly twenty-three thousand members, and more than a hundred and sixty traveling preachers.[14]

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[10] Centenary of Methodism, chaps. 13–15. Dublin, 1839.

[11] Minutes, etc., of the Prim. Wes. Methodists, p. 6. Dublin, 1819.

[12] In 1854 they had but 8,384. Schem's Ecclesiastical Year-Book reports them in 1860 at 9,158.

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[13] Ouseley's Vindication of the Irish Methodist Conference. 1817.

Some of its early ministerial heroes still linger, and will afford subjects of no little interest to the future Methodist historian; but most of them have gone to their eternal reward. Charles Graham, after traveling as a missionary nearly thirty-four years, was riding to one of his appointments near Athlone, a gray-headed veteran of seventy-four years, when he fell forward on his horse's neck by sudden illness; he was conveyed back to his home and died in the victory of faith, April 23, 1824. "His powerful appeals to his street congregations, were," say his brethren, "pathetic, and sometimes overwhelming; the multitudes heard, trembled, and fell before him."[15]

William Hamilton broke down in the labors of the mission. In 1816 he was compelled to retire from active service, but he continued to be a conspicuous representative of the Church. He died on the 8th of October, 1843, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the fifty-sixth of his ministry. The end of his long and useful career was triumphant. "If I could shout," he exclaimed, "so that the world might hear, I would tell of the goodness and love of God my Saviour. Not a cloud! not a cloud! Victory over death! The sting is taken away; glory, glory to God!"

Ouseley continued his brave warfare to the last. When seventy-four years old he was still abroad on the highways and in the market-places, as actively as ever, preaching fourteen, sixteen, and sometimes twenty sermons a week.

[14] Minutes of the English Conference, 1860. London.

[15] William Smith's Hist. of Wes. Methodism in Ireland, p 286.

In the last year of his life he was several times prostrated by sickness, but rallying his remaining energies, he went forth again and again to his missionary labors. On the 8th of April, 1839, he finished his ministry at Mountmellick, where he that day preached three times, once in the street. He returned to Dublin, where he lay down on his death-bed, a victor crowned with a triumphant end. "I have no fear of death; the Spirit of God sustains me; God's Spirit is my support!" was his dying exclamation. He departed to heaven on the 14th of May, 1839, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. It was the hundredth year of Methodism, and he was a noble proof that its heroic period still continued. "He was," say the English Minutes, "the most distinguished, efficient, and successful Irish missionary ever employed by our religious community. He labored with a devotion and earnestness worthy of the first and purest ages of the Christian Church; and to an extent never, perhaps, surpassed, and seldom equalled." Gideon Ouseley will be forever recognized as the Protestant apostle of Ireland; it is hardly too much to affirm that no one man has, directly and indirectly, done so much for her deliverance from the stupendous burden of superstition under which Popery has crushed her, more perhaps than it has any other land.

The obituary of the early Irish Methodist ministry records many other names scarcely less notable: James Morgan, the biographer of Thomas Walsh, a man of profound piety; Richard Boardman, one of the first preachers sent to America; Andrew Blair, a man "eminently useful," who, after a laborious life, and after lying ten weeks in one position, suffering intensely, died exclaiming, as his last words, "Let the name of the Lord be magnified! Glory be to God. Amen!" James M'Mullen, who, after laboring extensively at home, went as a missionary to Gibraltar, where he and his wife fell victims to an epidemic fever, both "dying in the full triumph of faith;" William Robertson, who departed declaring "There is a blessed reality in religion; O the inexpressible sweetness I find in Christ! Tell my friends I am going to heaven!" William Peacock, one of Ouseley's faithful missionaries, who, being driven from his bed at night by a mob, lay for hours in the wet grass, and was subject afterward to spasms, in one of which he departed to his reward; Thomas Edwards, who after about twenty years of arduous service died, saying, "I have fought a good fight, I am saved by grace;" John M'Adam, another missionary, who "praised God, and continued rejoicing and exhorting on his dying bed with little intermission for nearly forty-eight hours," and whose last words were "Glory! glory!" Thomas Johnston, who after twenty years of labor took a malignant fever from the sick to whom he ministered, and "died in the full assurance of faith;" John Price, who labored half a century, and enjoyed with little interruption for fifty years the full assurance of hope, and who, after walking five miles to one of his appointments "with the pains of death upon him," had the assembling people called to his bed, raised himself up, and shaking each by the hand gave them his blessing, and fell asleep in Christ; George Brown, who "walked in the light of the Lord, witnessing that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," during forty-three years, and during thirty-two years "preached the whole truth as it is in Jesus, living as he preached;" Samuel Steele, a man of rare abilities, who traveled thirty-four years, and whose "departure was triumphant;" John Hamilton, who in a ministry of thirty-one years was instrumental in the conversion of hundreds of his countrymen in the most benighted parts of Ireland; James Magee, who did important service for nineteen years; Walter Griffith, a man of deep piety and strong abilities, who, after sustaining the most important responsibilities of the Conference many years, died shouting "Glory! glory! glory! I have gained the victory through the blood of the Lamb!" Thomas Barber, who guided Adam Clarke's earliest religious course, a man of agreeable eccentricities, indefatigable energy and great success. "cease-less in prayer, visiting from house to house, meeting the classes in every place; in a word, instant in season and out of season," and a member of the Conference for nearly fifty years; Matthew Lanktree, fifty-five years in the ministry, and whose published memoirs are almost a history of his Conference; Matthew Tobias, forty-two years a prominent laborer; William Stewart, a veteran of commanding abilities; and scores of others, some of whom have been noticed in these volumes, but many of whom have necessarily been precluded by its limits. A cautious historical authority of Methodism does not hesitate to attribute to them "the preservation and revival of Protestantism" in Ireland. "For many years," he says, "they stood almost alone and unfriended in their generous endeavors to rescue the Irish people from the hateful and degrading tyranny of a wicked and rapacious priesthood, who destroyed souls for the sake of dishonest gain and of secular ambition. These upright and devoted men have meekly endured bitter privations and opposition; but their 'judgment is with the Lord, and their work with their God.'"[16] Irishmen have warred a good warfare, and died triumphantly in almost every important Methodist field of the world. They founded the denomination, or helped to found it, as we have seen, in the United States of America, in the British North American Provinces in the West Indies, in Australia, in Africa, and in India; and they sleep in missionary graves, awaiting the resurrection trumpet, in nearly all parts of the globe to which Methodism has borne the cross.

[16] Jackson's "Centenary," etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS, FROM 1825 TO 1839

Conference Proceedings — Foreign Evangelization — Shipwreck of Missionaries — Their terrible Sufferings — Missionary Enterprise in America — Great Growth of the United States — Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church — British Methodist Finances — The Contingent Fund — The Children's Fund — General Chapel Fund — Preachers' Auxiliary Fund — Education and the Education Fund — Ministerial Education — Wesleyan Theological Institution — Dr. Samuel Warren — The Methodist Polity in the Court of Chancery — Importance of the Court's Decision — A New Schism — Beneficial Results — The Canada Conference is separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and comes under the Jurisdiction of the British Conference — Deputations to and from the American General Conference — Methodism in America — Great Statistical Growth of British and American Methodism — Methodist Protestant Church.

In the period between the Conference of 1825 and the centenary year of Methodism, 1839, no important revision of the Wesleyan polity took place, except in a single instance. It was found to be thoroughly organized, and effective for the great moral ends of the denomination. Disturbances under it could arise only from such cases of personal discontent, ambition, or caprice as must attend the best devised schemes of government; but it proved itself capable, by the regularity and energy of its operation, of readily expelling all causes of serious discord; for, with a centripetal force which gave it unity and power, it had also a centrifugal tendency, which, while continually enlarging its range, speedily threw off incompatible men and measures. It had passed through so many trials and so many triumphs, it was accomplishing so much good to the country, it promised so much for the world, that it now seemed based, with immovable stability, in the profoundest conviction and affection of its people. The annual Minutes, therefore continue, with rare exceptions, to present a uniform record of mere routine business. Its eminent men preside at its annual sessions: Richard Watson, John Stephens, Jabez Bunting, James Townley, George Morley, George Marsden, Robert Newton, Richard Treffry, Joseph Taylor, Richard Reece, Edmund Grindrod, Thomas Jackson, and Theophilus Lessey, successively, except that Bunting is re-elected in 1836. Foreign, universal propagandism has now become the characteristic idea of the denomination. It concluded the first quarter of the century with Missionary representatives in France, Spain, Africa, Ceylon, Hindostan, New South Wales, Van Dieman's Land, New Zealand, the Friendly Isles, the West Indies, and various parts of the North American continent. It now rapidly announces new missions in these and other lands. It sends out ten, twenty, thirty missionaries in a single year. In the week preceding each session of the Conference, the "committees" meet at the place of the session, a virtual conference of leading laymen and preachers from all parts of the country. They review the chief interests of the Church, and prepare measures for their support during the ensuing year; but the missionary enterprise predominates over all others. Nearly every appointment has now its local Missionary Society, every circuit its Branch Society, every district its Auxiliary Society, and all are comprehended in the general Wesleyan Missionary Society, which thus extends its stately dimensions around and over the whole ecclesiastical structure, and has more direct relations with foreign Methodists than even the Conference itself. Some of the most important men of the latter are appointed to the secretaryship of the society: Richard Watson, Jabez Bunting, George Morley, John Mason, Robert Newstead, James Townley, John James, Thomas Edwards, John Beecham, Robert Alder, Elijah Hoole. The Missionary Board of Managers comprises the most distinguished laymen as well as preachers of the Connection: Thomas Thompson of Hull, James Wood of Manchester, Thomas Holy of Sheffield, Thomas Farmer, Thomas and William Marriott, Launcelot Haslope, George and James Heald, Thomas Allan, Joseph Butterworth, of London, and many similar men. A large list of deputations to various parts of the United Kingdom, to promote the cause at anniversary meetings, is inserted yearly in the printed Minutes, and the whole Connection is annually stirred by the appeals of these visitors. The Conference has its ancient Publishing House in London, constantly sending out books and periodicals; but its Mission House has now become paramount in popular interest and monumental significance, for it represents the foreign empire of Methodism, and sends out its influence not only through all the domestic circuits of the realm, but to the ends of the earth. At the close of this period no less than $125,000 (£25,000) are given by the people, besides their usual collections, for the erection of an edifice more befitting the importance of this great interest; and a Mission Ship for the South Sea Islands is proposed, which now navigates those distant waters exclusively in the service of the Church.

In the Conference preceding the centenary jubilee the Pastoral Address declares the Missionary work "essential" to, and "inseparable" from Wesleyan Methodism. It congratulates the denomination that by its agency "barbarous languages have been reduced to a written form;" that "translations of portions of the word of God," and of other books, in various languages, have been made by the missionaries; that the Mission presses were issuing them by thousands of copies; that persons of both sexes, and of all ranks, have been taught to read them in the mission schools; and that "now, when they are approaching the centenary year of their formal existence as a religious society, they are, by their agents, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in many of the languages of man."[1] In fine, Wesleyan Methodism now fully exemplifies before Christendom its providential

[1] Minutes of 1838, p. 309. London, 1841.

character as "a revival Church in its spirit, a Missionary Church in its organization."

In 1826 a terrible disaster occurred to the missions in the West Indies, which spread mourning through the Connection, but excited anew its missionary ardor. A vessel bearing five missionaries, Hillier, White, Truscott, Oke, and Jones, with the wife and three children of White, the wife and one child of Truscott, and the wife of Jones, was wrecked on the reefs near St. John's Harbor, Antigua. They were returning from the district meeting of the missionaries at St. Kitt's, where they had enjoyed, during several days, a religious jubilee with their brethren, assembled from various islands. After a fearful night, on their passage from Montserrat, they were in sight of Antigua, and hoping to reach it in the evening, when they were alarmed by the cry of "Breakers ahead!" The night was at hand, and the peril imminent. Every effort was made to escape the dangerous rocks, but the vessel missed stays twice and struck. The missionaries rushed to the cabin to rescue their wives and children, for the vessel was fast filling, and the sea broke furiously over her. She fell on her side; the boat was washed overboard, and carried out to sea with two of the sailors; the crew and passengers were compelled to hang upon the bulwarks and rails of the quarter deck, up to their middle in the water. During an hour they remained in this position, pressing to their hearts their children, exhorting one another to trust in God, and uttering prayers for deliverance or for a reunion in heaven. The waist of the vessel gave way, and all who were clinging to the quarter-deck sank into the sea: White, with his wife and three children; Truscott, his wife, child, and three servants; and the wife of Jones. The latter plunged into the waves and rescued his wife, who was thus spared to record the tragic scene. The children were carried away by the waves, making piteous appeals for help; the missionaries and their wives perished calmly, crying, as they went down, to their brethren on the wreck, "Farewell

The Lord bless you!" A fearful night ensued; the ship broke up fast; the remaining passengers and crew clung to her head while billow after billow swept over them. The morning at last dawned; they could see the inhabitants of the island walking on the shore; vessels and boats passed in sight during the day, but the cries of the sufferers were drowned by the noise of the breakers, and neither the wreck nor their signals could be seen amid the dashing waves. The missionaries and their wives spent the painful hours in prayer and in exhortations to the sailors, who wept and prayed with them, and two of whom died exhausted on the wreck, joining in their supplications. Another night of horrors passed over them. They had neither ate nor drank since the reef was struck; they sat, supporting each other on the wreck, up to their breasts in water, while the surges still swept over them. Most of the day was spent in mutual encouragements and in prayer. In the afternoon Hillier, determining to attempt to swim three miles to the shore for help, took an affecting farewell of his fellow-sufferers, plunged into the waves, swam some distance, but, enfeebled by hunger, soon sank exhausted. One or two of the sailors followed his courageous example, but perished. Another night passed; at noon the next day Oke attempted to swim to the shore, but was so weak that he sank immediately. Jones sat by the side of his wife, leaning his head upon her shoulder, unable to move. The captain attempted to raise him out of the water, but had not sufficient strength. "Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly!" exclaimed the dying missionary, and with the words "Glory! Glory!" quivering on his lips, he expired. His wife called to the captain, but received no reply; he too was now dying. She clung to the corpse of her husband a few minutes; a wave bore it from her embrace; she saw it floating away, and sank into insensibility, for the more than womanly fortitude that had endured such protracted horrors could endure no more. When her consciousness returned she found herself in the hands of deliverers, who, discovering the wreck, rescued her at the last moment. Her face was so swelled that her head appeared a shapeless mass. Her intellect had been so stunned by her terrible sufferings that she gazed vacantly at her rescuers, and appealingly asked them what they were going to do with her; and it was only by the utmost medical care that she was restored to health. She was the only survivor of the hapless company, except the two mariners who were carried out to sea in the small boat, and who were picked up by a French sloop.[2] Her account of the disaster was published in England; mournful though it was, it excited deep interest for the mission. Hundreds who read it merely as an exciting tale of horrors, learned from it to admire the Christian heroism of the missionaries; thousands who had contributed to the mission now regarded it with augmented sympathy.

Butterworth, on taking the chair of the Missionary Committee, in London, after the reception of the sad news, spoke with deep emotion of the calamity, but expressed the conviction that it would command increased interest and prayer among the people in behalf of the cause. To the whole Connection that cause now became more than ever sacred by its baptism of sorrow. Men were speedily found ready to step into the places of the fallen missionaries. The Conference commemorated the deceased brethren in their Obituary and in their Annual Addresses. "Such dispensations," it said to the American General Conference, "we attempt not to explain, but leave them in the hands of Him who orders all things in faithfulness and truth. He will interpret his own visitations. Though the witnesses die, their testimony lives; others, imbibing their spirit and imitating their holy example, are prepared to enter into their labors."

Meantime the missionary spirit was rapidly extending in the American Church. Its whole history had indeed been an almost unparalleled example of evangelization. Its utmost energy had been employed in providing for the western frontier, which, under the pressure of emigration, was advancing with surprising speed. The growth of no other portion of the globe has presented a sublimer spectacle than this grand march of a nation, in a line from the northern lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, at the rate of twelve or fifteen miles a year, sweeping away the primeval forest, and founding great states, with their cities, towns, roads, canals, civic edifices, schools, and churches. The Methodist itinerants were building up a moral empire in a nation whose territory was destined to be, by about the middle of the century, only one-sixth less than the area of the fifty-nine or sixty empires, states, and republics of Europe; of equal extent with the empire of Alexander or that of Rome; three times as large as Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark,[3] and whose population, estimated by its well-ascertained rates of increase, was to be, by the end of the century, more than one hundred millions strong, and, by about the end of the first quarter of the ensuing century, equal to the present population of all Europe. Whatever contingencies might hang over the confederacy of the republic, there could be little doubt of the prospective population and moral importance of the Continent; and the Church pursued its great work with the consciousness that it was laboring not only for the New World, but for the whole world. The Methodist itinerants kept pace with the foremost emigrants. They established Churches among the negroes and the aboriginal tribes, and for many years were unable to extend their plans to foreign lands. But in 1832 they began their first foreign operations in Africa, and prepared to explore Mexico and South America for missions. Their General Conference that year announced these designs to the Wesleyan Conference, as an imitation of the example of British Methodism: "Having received our own existence as a Church through missionary labor, we hope in turn," says their Address, "to water other lands through the same channels." The English Conference sent its congratulations to the American Methodists for this new indication. "Christ," it said, "will accompany the standard of his own cross. His promise is sure, and he has said, 'Lo I am with you, even unto the end of the world.'" So rapidly did the idea of foreign evangelization now extend in the American Church, that the whole denomination was soon pervaded and thrilled by it. Missionary societies were formed throughout its length and breadth. They had begun many years before for the domestic missions: as early as 1819 the "Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church" was organized by the exertions of such men as Nathan Bangs, Freeborn Garrettson, Samuel Merwin, Joshua Soule; and in 1820 the General Conference adopted the organization as an institution of the Church, but its operations had been comparatively feeble. At its anniversary in 1820 its receipts were reported as only $820, and its expenditures short of $86. The following year its receipts amounted to but little more than $2,300. The project of a foreign mission, attempted for the first time by the Methodist young men of Boston, in 1831, at the suggestion of Dr. Charles K. True, introduced a new era in the history of the denomination. In less than ten years its missionary treasury reported receipts to the amount of more than $135,000. In our day they amount to $263,000.[4] The division of the Church by the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has virtually partitioned the missionary work and thereby augmented it; the combined annual receipts of the two treasuries are now half a million dollars. Every one of the Conferences of the two bodies has its missionary society, and nearly every circuit and station has its stated missionary collection. The missionary idea has, in fine, permeated the whole system of American as of British Methodism, and has become supreme among its various philanthropic schemes. American Methodism is now represented by the able missionaries of one or both of its great sections in the mission fields of South America, the Sandwich Islands, China, India, Africa, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, and Sweden, as well as among the foreign populations of the United States, the aborigines, and the native colored race.

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[2] Incidents of Missionary Enterprise, p. 198. Edinburgh, 1842.

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[3] The Great Reform. A Prize Essay, etc., p. 118. New York, 1853.

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[4] An. Reports of the Miss. Soc. of the M. E. Church, 1840 and 1860 New York.

But the practical recognition of the providential relations of the British Connection to the foreign world, and the missionary enthusiasm which consequently pervaded its people, did not interfere with its domestic interests. On the contrary, the latter were invigorated by the former. Accordingly, we find in the Minutes that while the missionary collections leap, year after year, to aggregate sums which surprise the country, and which would seem sufficient to drain the charitable resources of the Church, its other denominational finances all rapidly assume a more effective organization, and yield unexpected incomes. At the close of this period it had several "Funds," which had now become permanent parts of its ecclesiastical economy.

The Contingent Fund was first formally ordained at the thirteenth Conference, held at Bristol in 1756.[5] It is sustained by an annual collection in all the societies, by donations and bequests, and by appropriations from the Book Room. It is used for the support of home missionaries, for the deficits of preachers on poor circuits, and for defraying law and other extraordinary expenses. It yields at present more than $80,000 (£16,000) annually.[6]

The Children's Fund was proposed at the session of 1818. As the itinerant system of ministerial labor required the periodical distribution of the preachers, it often happened that men of large families were appointed to feeble circuits. The Conference resolved therefore to apportion the support of the children of its families to all the circuits of the respective districts, in proportion to the number of members of society. By this arrangement large circuits, which may have fewer than their equitable proportion of children

[5] Grindrod's Compendium, IV, 12.

[6] Minutes of 1860.

to support, pay their preachers for such as they have, and send the balance to the common fund, the less able circuits drawing meantime upon this fund for the amount of their claims.[7] In 1819 the district meetings accepted the proposed plan, and the Children's Fund has since become one of the most important supports of the Wesleyan ministry.

Conspicuous among these financial schemes is the General Chapel Fund, proposed at a meeting of preachers and laymen in 1817, and instituted in 1818. It is supplied by annual collections, subscriptions, and legacies. Its object is to relieve embarrassed chapels, and to promote the liberality of the people in the repair of old or the erection of new edifices—parsonages and school-houses, as well as chapels, by affording them assistance proportionate to their own exertions. The Conference of 1832 congratulated the Connection that $200,000 (£40,000) had been distributed, in nearly three thousand annual grants, among the trustees of indebted chapels toward deficiencies of interest, and nearly $100,000 (£20,000) as "final grants," to meet upward of $155,000 (£31,000) raised by the trustees themselves; debts to the amount of $255,000 (£51,000) being thereby extinguished. From the report for 1840 it appears that, besides what was done by the Centenary Relief Fund, the Trustees of embarrassed chapels raised $432,870 (£86,574;) the committee of the fund made corresponding grants to the amount of $425,565, (£85,113,) making a total of debt extinguished, $858,435, (£171,687,) "which," says a Wesleyan writer, "all things considered, is the noblest financial achievement recorded in the annals of our prosperous Connection."[8] This fund received various minor improvements during our present period, and is now a source of incalculable benefit to the denomination. The estimated cost of the erections and enlargements, at the latest annual report, was nearly $770,000 (£154,000;) the total number of erections and enlargements was more than two hundred, nearly one hundred being new chapels, besides thirty-five cases which did

[7] Porter's Compendium, I, 5.

[8] Grindrod, IV, 12, 3.

not receive the sanction of the fund committee. More than $275,000 (£55,000) were applied during the year for the reduction or extinction of debts, and $530,000 (£106,000) for erections and enlargements; the aggregate amount raised and expended on Wesleyan trust property being nearly $810,000 (£162,000.) The Chapel Loan Fund and the Chapel Committee are important adjuncts of the Chapel Fund, the first providing loans for trustees, the second controlling more or less the general policy of the Connection respecting the erection of new or the enlargement of old chapels, and authorizing or restraining the expense of such measures.

The early provisions for "old and worn-out preachers" have already been noticed—"The Preachers' Fund" of 1763, superseded by the "Itinerant Methodist Preachers' Annuity" in 1799, and the "Preachers' Merciful Fund," which took the title of "Auxiliary Fund" in 1813. The latter was supplied by the contributions of a comparatively small proportion of the people, to eke out the provisions of the Annuity Society for special cases among decayed preachers or the widows of deceased preachers. But in 1837 the Centenary Committee proposed a more effective means of support for such cases, upon the principle of the Childrens' Fund. The Conference approved the suggestion, and appointed a committee of preachers and laymen to meet at Manchester in 1838 and mature a plan for the purpose. The Auxiliary Fund was thus reorganized, on an enlarged and effective scale. It was ascertained that there were, in 1838, no less than three hundred and fifty persons entitled to its provisions, one hundred and seventy-six of them being widows. Besides these there were nearly a hundred children to provide for. The Centenary Committee voted the generous sum of $45,000 (£9,000) as a basis of the measure; and an annual circuit collection of a sum equal to six pence per member, together with voluntary subscriptions and legacies, was expected to provide its necessary resources. Its latest report shows an income of nearly $62,500,

(£12,500,) and appropriations to no less than two hundred preachers, and two hundred and sixty-nine widows.[9]

The School Fund was designed to support Wesley's plan for the education of preachers' children at Kingswood, and subsequently at Wood House Grove and New Kingswood. An annual collection, the payment of a given annual fee by preachers having children in the institution, and voluntary donations, sustain this important scheme. The schools, having a thorough system of training, and being under the household governorship of venerable preachers, afford not only education but comfortable domestic shelter to the children of the itinerants, and are especially important to the mission families, many of which are in parts of the heathen world, where the barbarous life around them must prove perilous to early education, even in Christian households.

These first educational provisions opened the way for an extensive system of schools and academies in the denomination. In 1836 the Conference gave its approval to the project of a "Proprietary School," or college, at Sheffield, whose stately structure is now an ornament to the vicinity of that city; and still later has risen the Collegiate Institution at Taunton. Both these institutions are in a collegiate relation to the London University. A system of "Day Schools" followed, assisted by the imperial government, and has given origin to the General Education Fund, which now reports five hundred and fourteen day schools, with nearly seventy thousand scholars. These schools have given birth to the Wesleyan Normal School at Westminster, for the education of teachers. Its buildings were erected at a cost of $200,000, (£40,000,) and give training to one hundred and twenty-three students.[10]

The public collections for various funds and other financial schemes were assigned systematically, by the Conference, during the present period, to different months of the year, putting the whole Church under an habitual training in pecuniary liability. Seven such annual contributions, throughout the entire denomination, were on the list in the Minutes, by the year 1839. The business relating to them now amounted to a large, if not a chief part, of the transactions of the Conference. Their committees, combining the leading laymen and preachers, met regularly at the place of the annual session, and occupied most of the preceding week in revising their affairs and in preparing them for the ensuing year. And these preparations, submitted to the Conference, were almost invariably adopted by the latter without change. In fine, the session of these great committees, uniting a lay and a clerical representation of the denomination, has become practically an important part of the Wesleyan Conference, controlling its chief interests and wielding its chief agencies among the people, and they have resulted in a practical education of the Wesleyan community to financial beneficence which is without a parallel in Protestant Christendom.

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[9] Report of Auxiliary Fund, 1859, p. 48. London.

[10] Minutes of Conference for 1860, p. 231. London. See also vol. ii, book vi, chap. 5, of the present work.

One of the most interesting proofs of the advancement of the Church is the evidence we meet, as we turn over the pages of the Minutes of these years, of the growing demand for improved ministerial qualifications. Methodism spontaneously recognized education as one of its most important means of usefulness. But if it would educate its people, it must necessarily educate its ministry, or produce a disparity between the two, which must prove fatal to the latter. Wesley proposed, as we have seen, in his very first Conference, a school for the training of his preachers, and, in default of financial means and suitable instructors, Kingswood school was made indirectly to serve this purpose. Meanwhile the high intellectual character of many of the ministerial leaders of the Church practically raised the standard of pulpit ability, and promoted the popular demand for it. The Conference gave the subject frequent deliberation. As early as 1816 a pamphlet was circulated among the District-meetings on "The importance of a Plan of Instruction for those Preachers who are admitted on Trial in the Methodist Connection." John Gaulter, Jabez Bunting, Thomas Jackson, and Richard Watson, prepared in 1823, by order of the Conference, a report on the project; it was approved, but was not yet found practicable. In 1829 the Conference declared: "We unanimously agree that the time is now fully come when some more systematic and effectual plan ought to be attempted for affording to those preachers who have been placed, after the usual examinations and recommendations, on the List of Reserve, but are not immediately needed for the regular supply of our circuits, such means of instruction in the doctrines and discipline of Methodism, and of general improvement, as may prepare them for future usefulness." It proposed to place them under the tuition of senior preachers, on different circuits, till a better plan could be devised. A committee, including Bunting, Watson, Jackson, Hannah, and similar men, was appointed to mature such a plan. The committee was reappointed from year to year, and in 1833 it met in London and adopted a report, which it submitted to the Conference of 1834, presenting the "outline of a plan for the Wesleyan Theological Institution." The Conference sanctioned the scheme, and appointed Bunting President of the Seminary; Entwisle, Governor of its House; and Hannah, its Theological Tutor; authorizing also the appointment of a Classical Tutor. Thomas Farmer was elected its Treasurer. Abney House, memorable as the asylum of Isaac Watts, at Stoke Newington, was obtained for the institution. The Centenary Committee pledged it, in 1838, $137,500, (£27,500.) It was soon divided into two branches and imposing buildings were erected for its accommodation in the north, at Didsbury, near Manchester, and in the south, at Richmond, near London.

Next to its Missionary development this institution may, perhaps, be considered the most significant fact in the progress of Methodism. It is educating for the Christian ministry to-day eighty-seven students; nearly five hundred well-trained young men have gone forth from its salutary nurture to reinforce the itinerant ministry, and many of them have fallen martyrs on the foreign mission fields. Few institutions of Methodism have, indeed, been more providentially auxiliary to its missionary enterprise. Many of its pupils go to distant lands already acquainted with their vernacular languages. Its system of instruction is classical as well as theological, but is strictly conformed to the destination of its pupils. It promises an inestimable effect on the intellectual character of the Wesleyan ministry, and, through the ministry, on the character of British Methodism generally.

Not a little agitation accompanied the initiation of this important measure. Many devoted members of the society, and some members of the Conference, suspected that its tendency would be deteriorating to the simplicity and purity of the ministry; others, restless under the government of the Church, or disappointed in their ambition for places in the management or offices of the new institution, availed themselves of the occasion to disturb the peace of the Connection. A prominent member of the Conference, Dr. Samuel Warren, led the way in these disturbances. He had been on the committee which was appointed by the Conference for the organization of the school; he had agreed fully with his colleagues in its plan, except that he wished the modest scheme to be dignified with the title of "a College;" but, on finding that his own name was not reported in the nomination of its officers, he opposed the institution with extraordinary animosity. He issued a pamphlet against it, rallying disaffected persons in Manchester and Liverpool to his support.[11] The "Grand Central Association" was formed for the purpose of an organized attack on the fundamental polity of the Church. Warren was one of those able but irascible and impetuous men, whose energy may be effective under good leaders, but whose own leadership is sure to ruin their cause. His speech and writings against his brethren were extremely violent. He was suspended by the District meeting of Manchester, and Robert Newton was requested to undertake the superintendency of the first Manchester circuit in his stead. He applied to the Court of Chancery for an injunction against Newton and the Trustees of the Oldham-street Chapel, all of whom concurred in his exclusion, and against the Trustees of the Oldham Road Chapel, two or three of the trustees of which took side with him. The case commanded profound interest, for it involved the very constitution of the Connection, and the court was crowded for three days while the question was under argument. The Vice-Chancelor, Sir Launcelot Shadwell, sustained the District-meeting, and thereby gave an important vindication of the legal validity of the Wesleyan polity. He failed not also to avail himself of the occasion to pronounce an opinion on the character of the Connection. "I do not think," he remarked, "that any question can be deemed or considered of a trifling nature which concerns the well-being —I may also say, the existence—of a body such as that which is composed of the Wesleyan Methodists. It is my firm belief, that to that body we are indebted for a large portion of the religious feeling which exists among the general body of the community, not only of this country, but throughout a great portion of the civilized world besides. When, also, I recollect that the society owes its origin and first formation to an individual so eminently distinguished as the late John Wesley, and when I remember that, from time to time, there have arisen out of this body some of the most able and distinguished individuals that ever graced and ornamented any society whatever—I may name one for all, the late Dr. Adam Clarke—I must come to the conclusion, that no persons who have any proper understanding of what religion is, and regard for it, can look upon the general body of the Wesleyan Methodists without the most affectionate interest and concern."

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[11] Wes. Mag., 1835, p. 35.

Warren and his associates were confounded at first by this decision; but he was not the man to learn prudence by defeat. He resolved to carry the case by appeal to the

Lord Chancelor. Again was the whole Church excited with anxiety. The highest judiciary of the realm, except Parliament, was to pronounce on its fundamental laws and vindicate it forever, or expose it and the vast practical organizations which it sheltered, to the disruptions of faction, to disintegration, perhaps to ruin. The case was argued four days before Lord Lyndhurst; the court was thronged; the interest of the spectators was intense; the gray heads of many veterans of the Methodist ministry and laity, men who had battled through long and weary lives for their beloved cause, were distinguishable in the crowd. After hearing the case the Lord-Chancelor required two days for its consideration. On the 25th of March, 1835, he gave his decision; the court was crowded beyond former example; he occupied an hour in delivering his judgment, in an elaborate review of the Methodist polity as established by Wesley's Deed of Declaration, and exemplified in the chief events of the Conference. When it was perceived what his conclusion must be, deep but controlled emotion spread through the assembly, tears flowed from many eyes, and when he finally pronounced that "the judgment of the Vice-Chancelor must be affirmed," it was felt that a momentous era in Methodism had been reached, that the broad seal of English law had been stamped upon the legislation of John Wesley, that the chapels, funds, and all the fundamental authorities of Wesleyan Methodism were secure for ages. It might have been pardonable had the Methodists who thronged the court given audible expression to their pent-up feelings; but they retired in reverent silence, thanking God in their hearts with unutterable gratitude, and regarding the illustrious jurist, "in his official character, as the minister of God for good."[12]

Notwithstanding these decisions, and his persistent efforts at organized agitation, Warren had the temerity to appeal to the next Conference against the course of the District-meeting which had suspended him. He had forfeited the right of appeal, but the Conference heard him with patient dignity, and afterward pronounced him expelled from the Connection. Thus did the seeming evil, which at first attended the wise effort to provide education for its ministry, result in one of the most mermorable advantages to the Conference, and to British Methodism generally.[13]

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[12] See the documents relating to this case, to the suits in Chancery etc. in the Minutes for 1835.

The "Grand Central Association" became the basis of a new Methodist sect, the "Associated Methodists." It relieved the Connection of some turbulent elements. A schismatic party, which had lingered at Leeds since 1829, joined the new body. At its second assembly it reported 20,000 members. In twenty years it advanced but little more than 2,000. Warren labored energetically at first to promote its success, but subsequently took refuge in the ministry of the national Church. At a later date than our assigned limits, many of the seceders combined with other Methodist separatists, under the title of "The Methodist Free Church." Their united force amounts to about 46,000.[14]

This new conflict was of no little importance to the Church as a test of not only the legal validity of its constitution, but also of its practical vigor. Seldom has Methodism had a more determined, or more violent schism; never a schism guided by a more commanding leader; but its effect on the prosperity of the Connection was slight and temporary. An important measure in the scheme of the seceders was the "withholding of supplies;" they exhorted the circuits to support their respective preachers, but to contribute nothing whatever to the general funds of the Connection till the alleged grievances should be redressed. The menace seemed so grave that the Conference of 1835 took it into serious consideration, and sent forth a circular, signed individually by the preachers present, exposing the flagrancy of the measure, for it involved the support of the worn-out preachers, of the widows and orphans of deceased preachers, of the missionaries among the heathen, and of all the holiest charities of the Church. The circular had effect; these charities were sustained, and it was soon perceived that the financial energy of the body was to go on augmenting beyond any precedent in its history; and four years later, at the centenary jubilee, it was crowned by a munificence which astonished the Christian world. The effect of the schism on the numerical force of the Church was also but temporary. Its aggregate returns of members continue to show an increase, though in Great Britain there was a loss of 951 in 1835. The next year there was a gain of more than 2,000 in Great Britain alone, with large gains elsewhere. In 1837 there was a decrease of 439 in Great Britain, but still a considerable aggregate increase. In 1838 the gain in Great Britain alone was more than 4,000, and in 1839 the Connection was again in its career of untrammeled prosperity, its increase being more than 16,000, and its affiliated Conferences and other fields also reporting gains.

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[13] The judgments of Shadwell and Lyndhurst are given at length in Grindrod, App. III. The Methodists were fortunate in having as their solicitor in this case a lawyer who combined with professional accomplishments a thorough knowledge of Methodist law and history, T. Percival Bunting, Esq., son of Jabez Bunting.

[14] Schem's Ecclesiastical Year-Book, p. 23; Edward's Enc. of Relig. Knowledge, p. 803.

The success with which the Connection came forth, in 1797, from it first great internal struggle had given a pledge of its stability; its speedy and signal triumph in this new trial verified the pledge. The Conference of 1839 was able to say in its Pastoral Address: "It gives us the highest pleasure to believe that never, during the whole period of their existence as a religious community, were the Wesleyan ministers and societies more thoroughly united in Christian love and respect than they are at the present time. The means that have been employed to disunite them have signally failed. Contentious agitations have ceased, and the fruits of that peace which God has vouchsafed to the Connection are already and very hopefully apparent. It is now seen and felt how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; for then the Lord commands his blessing. The official reports which we have received, of the general peace and harmony of the Connection, have afforded us the highest satisfaction. We believe that it never was in a healthier state."

Another advantage resulted from this controversy. Bunting prepared a "Special Address" of the Conference to the societies, embodying explanations and some emendations of its discipline, especially of rules or usages which had been most assailed by the seceders. This document recognized decidedly the propriety of "mixed committees" of preachers and laymen in the administration of the funds and other temporalities of the denomination, a policy already in practice, but now more uniformly applied. It made new provisions for accused members under trial, granting them farther opportunities of appeal. It authorized applications to the Conference from the people, through "the June Quarterly-meeting of every year," for any changes in the government of the Connection not incompatible with its constitution as left by Wesley. The Address, remarkable for its luminous style, its candor and comprehensiveness, would have done credit to any statesman of the age.

The territorial jurisdiction of Wesleyan Methodism was much enlarged in the present period by the addition of the Upper Canada Conference. The Eastern British Provinces of North America had always been under the care of the English Conference; but as Methodism was planted in Upper Canada by the Methodist Episcopal Church, the latter had hitherto maintained jurisdiction over it. As it was thus subject to the government of a Church in a foreign nation, the civil authorities of Canada alleged that they had no satisfactory guarantee of the loyalty of the preachers; and the latter were subjected to legal disabilities, and were not even permitted to consecrate the rites of matrimony among their own people The Canada Conference therefore petitioned the American General Conference, of 1828, to be set apart by a distinct organization. The General Conference acknowledged the expediency of the request, and by a formal act dissolved the relation between them, allowing to the Canadian brethren, nevertheless, important claims on the Missionary and Book Room funds of the American Church.[15] The Canadian Conference designed to maintain an independent government, and provision was made by the American General Conference for its episcopal organization; it subsequently became apparent, however, that its relations to the Wesleyan Church, in the eastern provinces, would become complicated by its independence and an episcopal polity. After consultations with Robert Alder, representative of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, the Canadian brethren sent Egerton Ryerson to England with overtures for a union with the British Conference, and in 1833 the latter accepted the proposal, and appointed George Marsden a representative to visit Canada, preside in its Conference, and negotiate the arrangement. Joseph Stinson, formerly a missionary in Canada, was sent with him as his companion and as agent of the Missionary Committee. As the terms of the union authorized the Wesleyan Conference to appoint yearly a president for the Canadian Conference, Edmund Grindrod was designated to that office for 1834. A sum not exceeding £1,000 per annum was appropriated toward the support of the Canada Missions. The union was happily consummated, and British Methodism thus comprehended, at last, the whole territory of British America.

Meantime the reciprocal delegated representation of the Wesleyan and American Episcopal Methodist bodies continued. In the Conference of 1828 Dr. William Capers was received as delegate of the American General Conference with warmest cordiality. They were surprised and cheered by his report of the success of the common cause in America—that 69,000 souls had been added to the

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[15] This case involved some important principles of constitutional law; it is given fully by Bangs, (Hist. of M. E. Church, vol. iii, p. 388, and vol. iv, pp. 99, 236,) and will come under our notice in the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

American societies since the visit of the preceding American deputation. This news enhanced the gratitude with which they rejoiced over their own prosperity, for their own returns, for the year, showed a gain of more than 10,000 members, and nearly fifty probationers were admitted to the full membership of the Conference in the presence of Capers. "We rejoice," they said, in their letter to the American Church, "in this exchange of representative messengers. It is a public declaration that the union which subsists between us, notwithstanding distance of situation and diversity of labor, is close and unbroken. It delightfully reminds us that we are brethren, pursuing the same designs, publishing the same vital doctrines in the same language, and witnessing similar triumphs of truth, and order, and happiness on each side of the Atlantic. It serves to disclose new views of the rapid extension of Christ's kingdom in the two great divisions of our common work, and thus supplies additional and growing evidence that the Gospel which we preach is the 'power of God unto salvation' to people of every caste and color who believe. By the exact information which such an intercourse affords of the plans and exertions that we are respectively employing, it tends to combine our mutual light, and assist us in devising still greater facilities for the diffusion of truth and mercy in the world." At the session of 1835 William Lord was commissioned to represent the Conference in the American General Conference of 1836. The American Methodists rivaled the hospitality of their English brethren in their treatment of the deputation. In their reply to the letter of the British Conference, they avow their continued and deepening sentiment of fraternity with Wesleyan Methodism. They mourn the deaths of two of their bishops, M'Kendree and Emory, and the destruction of their Publishing House by fire, a disaster which involved the loss of property to the amount of $250,000; they were afflicted also by a diminution in the number of their communicants. But these trials were to be transient:

the spontaneous liberality of their people was speedily to restore and endow their Book Rooms; their missionary receipts rapidly augmented, and their numerical growth was resumed with more vigor than ever. Dr. Wilbur Fisk was deputed to represent them in the Wesleyan Conference, and was received by it with its usual fraternal cordiality in 1836. His reception was the more gratifying as extraordinary attempts had been made, by exterior agents, to embarrass his mission with the question of slavery, then under excited controversy in both England and America. The British Conference had alluded, with much frankness, to this subject in its letters to the American General Conference, and the latter had explained, in reply, its peculiar relations to the controversy. Fisk now had the opportunity of presenting, in more detail, these explanations. The mutual good understanding of the two bodies was thus confirmed, and the American delegate was treated with emphatic expressions of respect. Documents addressed to the Conference against his reception were peremptorily denied a reading. He addressed the Conference; preached repeatedly before it; his portrait was published in its Magazine; he assisted in the ordination of its probationers, and, by his influence, the form of ordination, by imposition of hands, was adopted for the first time by the Conference, he himself sharing in the ceremony.[16] At the session of 1839 Robert Newton was appointed to represent the Conference at the next American General Conference. His visit was an occasion of great interest to American Methodists—a religious ovation through much of their country, and its record will afford an important episode in their history.

The numerical growth of the denomination, during these fourteen years, confirmed strikingly the statistical evidence which, for about a hundred years, had demonstrated the internal energy of Methodism. It possessed, in its peculiar ecclesiastical arrangements, better means than any other contemporary Church of ascertaining accurately its numerical condition.

[16] Holdich's Life of Fisk, ch. 17. New York, 1842.

With but occasional exceptions, it had, during a century of labors and struggles, been able to record continual advancement. So seldom, indeed, were the exceptions, that they were deemed anomalous and alarming, demanding heart-searchings and prayerful deprecations. They were attributed to the divine displeasure, and the Church was exhorted to make haste to reform any defects and repair its losses by a more consecrated life and more diligent labors. The sentiment was inherent in the very consciousness of the denomination, that it must invincibly move forward, that it had a mission to the world, which must not only know no defeat, but no temporary retreat. Its centenary returns seemed a divine attestation of its history and its destiny. Its domestic increase alone was more than ten thousand members, besides many thousands of probationers; its missions yielded a gain of nearly six thousand. There were now nearly seventy-three thousand communicants in its missions. So rapid had been its missionary development, so thoroughly had it been assuming this great third phase of its history, that the numerical force of its missions lacked but little more than four thousand to equal the whole number of members, domestic and missionary, reported at the last Conference which Wesley attended, while the number of missionaries alone exceeded, by nearly fifty, the whole number of preachers, including missionaries, enrolled in Wesley's last Minutes. The whole number of members under the care of the Conference, including Upper Canada, had advanced from 283,057 in 1825, to 420,178 in 1839, exclusive of the itinerant preachers, showing a gain of 137,121, or an average gain of nearly 9,800 per year.[17] Including the ministry, the number of communicants was now 421,813. The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States advanced meantime from 348,195 in 1825, to 749,216 in 1839,[18] showing an increase of 401,021, and an average gain of more than 28,644 per year. Its increase for the last year was more than 44,200, and it celebrated the centenary jubilee of Methodism with the enthusiastic gratitude which such unparalleled prosperity might well inspire. It had extended its beneficent labors throughout all the states of the confederation, and had laid its foundations on the Pacific coast. It now reported 327,400 more members and preachers than the parent Church, with all its foreign dependencies. The returns of both bodies amounted to 1,171,029; the increase in both from 1825 to 1839, including preachers, being 537,470, an average per year of more than 38,390. Thus was a mighty army annually added to their ranks.

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[17] Minutes of 1839. They give the Canada returns for 1837, as no later report had been received.

[18] Minutes of Methodist Episcopal Church, 1839.

The Wesleyan ministry advanced during this period from 1,083 to 1,635, a gain of 552, an average annual gain of nearly forty. The ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meantime, increased from 1,314 to 3,557, a gain of 2,243, an average annual gain of more than 160. The American Methodist ministry was now considerably more than double that of British Methodism, including in the latter Upper Canada and its other foreign branches. The aggregate ministry of the two bodies amounted to 5,192.

The progress of American Methodism, great as it was, during this period, would have been greater had it enjoyed internal peace; but it passed through a severe ordeal of agitation and secession. As early as 1824 the question of lay representation in the Conferences, and kindred questions, became subjects of excited discussion. Personal passions on both sides too often marred what should have been a devout and loyal inquiry respecting a matter of practical expediency for the common good. Reciprocal attacks in pamphlets, and in periodicals published for the controversy, and in public meetings, led to ecclesiastical trials, expulsions, and conventions, and at last, in 1830, to the organization of a new Methodist body, "The Methodist Protestant Church," which was founded by men whose character, talents, and prestige as eminent preachers, rendered their loss to the parent Church a deplorable misfortune, the more deplorable as the heated controversy but anticipated changes which, in our day, the elder Church has shown a disposition calmly to consider if not to adopt. The secession bore away, it is alleged, between twenty and thirty thousand members; but such was the recuperative energy of the Church, that during the worst years of the agitation its annual returns showed large gains: in 1829 they amounted to more than twenty thousand, in 1830 to more than twenty eight thousand.[19] The Methodist Protestant Church has struggled through many adversities, but now reports ninety thousand communicants, two thousand preachers, twelve hundred chapels, seven collegiate institutions, four weekly periodicals, and two Book Concerns.[20]

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[19] Bangs's History vol. iii, p. 432. The History of the Methodist Protestant Church will be given in the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

[20] Dr. Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. vii. Introduction p. 18. New York, 1861.

CHAPTER XVII.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD FROM 1825 TO 1839.

Great Losses of the Ministry — Charles Atmore — David Stoner's last Labors — Thomas Vasey, one of Wesley's American Missionaries — John Smith, the "Revivalist" — His Character and Death — Adam Clarke at Haydon Hall — He finishes his Commentary — Its Character — His genial Old Age — His Opinion of the best kind of Preaching — He visits Ireland and Shetland — Scenes of his Childhood — His Death by Cholera — Richard Watson — Completion of his Exposition — Dissension at Leeds — Watson's Literary and other Services — His Death — Daniel Isaac — His Character and Writings — David M'Nichol — Lady Maxwell — Death of Ministerial Veterans — Of eminent Laymen — Thomas Thompson, of Hull — Samuel Drew — Samuel Hick, "the Village Blacksmith" — William Carvosso — The extraordinary Success of Methodism.

THE great gain of more than five hundred and fifty preachers, or an average of nearly forty a year, in the period from 1825 to 1839, appears the more remakable when we consider the large losses of the ministry. More than fifty of its members desisted from traveling, and no less than three hundred and forty-nine were reported in the Conference obituary. Among the latter were not a few historical men.

Charles Atmore died July 1, 1826,[1] in the sixty-seventh year of his age, after an itinerant career of forty-five years, during which he did important service to the Church. His piety was fervent and uniform, his manners cordial, his preaching direct and popular. He commemorated many of his old fellow-laborers in his "Methodist Memorial."[2] In 1811 he was elected to the presidency of the Conference, He zealously labored and traveled for its Missionary cause, and died with the assurance that Methodism was destined to have a nobler history than it had yet anticipated. His last sufferings, which were extreme, were borne, not only with extreme fortitude, but with religious exultation. "I have lived to die," he said, "but now I die to live: I shall enjoy all that my God can give." "Memory and recollection are almost gone; and you see," he remarked, as he held up his shrunken hand, "I am quite in ruins! What a ruin! But, thank God, I am not dismayed; for though my flesh and heart fail, God is my portion." "I scarcely dared to hope," he still later observed, "for a triumphant end, but merely an entrance into the haven of repose, that, with the crew of the vessel in which St. Paul sailed, I might gain the shore upon 'broken pieces of the ship.' But God is better to me than all my fears; he exceeds my most sanguine expectations. O yes! he has promised that an abundant entrance shall be administered unto me into his everlasting kingdom." "I am just ready,

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[1] Wes. Mag., 1845, p. 548.

[2] The Methodist Memorial, etc. Bristol, 1801.

'With starry pinions on,
Dressed for the flight, and ready to be gone.'"

To his weeping family he exclaimed: "O do give me up! Let me go! Glory, glory, glory! Jesus, Jesus!" The next day he was gone.

The labors of the devoted David Stoner have been narrated down to the year 1825. The obituary of 1827 records his death. In 1826 he was appointed to the Liverpool circuit, where, in a few weeks, he closed his useful career, but not till he had made a deep impression on the circuit. Twenty-six times he preached in Liverpool and its vicinity, and visible good was accomplished, it is said, by every discourse. He encouraged band-meetings, promoted preaching in private houses, and enforced everywhere the importance of direct labors for the salvation of souls. All who had familiar intercourse with him at this time observed a remarkable elevation of his spirit, a sublime earnestness and spiritual power. They could not, says his biographer, refrain from thinking that he was preparing for some great event, though they little supposed it would be his translation to heaven. His last sermon was, perhaps, the most powerful he ever delivered; outlines of it remain; they are overwhelming in their solemn persuasiveness. His sickness was painful; but his faith triumphed in the consuming fire. "Jesus, thou art my hope and confidence forever and ever!" he exclaimed a few hours before his departure. His last words were characteristic of his whole ministry: "Lord, save sinners! Save them by thousands! Subdue them! Conquer them!" Thus praying, he expired on the 23d of October, 1826, in his thirty-third year.[4] His intellectual powers were above mediocrity, his education liberal, his assiduity in study extreme, his piety extraordinary. Entwisle, who was his colleague on Bradford circuit during two years, says: "His eye was single; he was the most popular preacher of all I have known in his regular circuit work; but I could never perceive that his popularity gratified him." "He was little, very little in his own eyes," says M'Allum; "self-abasement was with him habitual, and, from a certain constitutional sadness, would have sunk him into despair, but for the great measure of grace with which he was blessed." He was "a burning and a shining light," say the Conference Minutes, "the favored instrument in the conversion of many hundreds of sinners."

Thomas Vasey died in the same year. He was one of Wesley's early missionaries to America, where he spent two years, and was ordained by Bishop White, of Pennsylvania. On his return to England he accepted a curacy, with Wesley's approbation; but in 1789 he resumed his place in the Wesleyan ministry. From 1811 to 1826 he officiated at City Road Chapel, and, as an ordained clergyman, rendered important services to the metropolitan societies. He lingered to the extreme age of eighty-four, and was venerated as a patriarch of the elder Methodism. In his last year he retired from London to Leeds, choosing to die in the latter place because of the matured piety of its

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[3] Memoirs, by Dawson and Hannah, p. 234.

[4] Not in 1825, as say the Minutes of 1827.

Methodist societies. He constantly attended their select bands, as the best schools for instruction in "the deep things of God." On the 27th of December, 1826, he rose in his usual health, but, at about ten o'clock in the morning was seized with convulsions, and died in a few minutes.[5]

John Smith, "the revivalist," appears on the list of the dead in the Minutes of 1832. He departed in triumph on the 3d of November, 1831. His extraordinary career has already been traced down to the year 1825; it continued to be the same course of flaming zeal, irresistible energy and success to the last. On Nottingham, Preston, Lincoln, and Sheffield circuits his labors reproduced the marvelous religious excitements which attended his ministrations on York, Barnard Castle, Brighton, Windsor, and Frome circuits. At the end of almost every quarter great numbers—scores, a hundred, three hundred, sometimes five hundred souls—were reported as added to the societies. His chapels were crowded; and his prayer-meetings and love-feasts reminded the wondering people of the "day of pentecost." He was powerful in the pulpit; few preachers of Methodism have been more so; but he was more powerful on his knees; and while his prevalent intercessions were ascending, bowed hundreds wept and sobbed, or cried aloud with emotion, and it seemed that the heavens were opened and Christ revealed at the right hand of God. It is impossible to describe the solemn scenes which his circuits presented wherever he went; the whole vicinity was frequently stirred with religious interest; the worst men were smitten under his words, and the Churches were not only replenished with converts, but elevated in piety and zeal. Though an athletic man, nearly six feet in stature, his health was not adequate to his labors. His sermons were brief, being remarkable for their condensation; but his intense earnestness consumed him, and for some months before his death he was compelled to retire from his regular work;

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[5] Wes. Mag., 1827, p. 142. He will be more fully noticed in the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

but as he journeyed about the country seeking health, he could hardly refrain from his usual labors, and at last returned to Sheffield to die. He had some mental conflicts toward the end, but triumphed over them all. "All is clear," he said to one of his colleagues; "I have had some success in my labors, but my happiness does not result from that, but from this: I have now hold of God. I am a very great sinner, and am saved by the wonderful love of God in Christ Jesus. I throw my person and my labors at his feet." "Glory be to God!" exclaimed a fellow-itinerant, rising from his knees by the bedside of the dying evangelist, "while a heavenly influence filled the room.'' "Amen!" responded the latter. It was the last articulate sound he uttered. The Conference said in its Minutes, that his sermons were plain, powerful, and awakening; that he delighted in magnifying the mercy of God, and in expatiating upon the atonement of Christ; that he was peculiarly happy in his mode of directing penitent sinners to the exercise of faith in Christ for a present and full salvation, and in conducting believers to all the heights of holiness; that he possessed invincible courage in the service of his Master; that there was an authority in his look and manner, which not unfrequently subdued the stoutest heart, and caused the most hardened offender to tremble in his presence; that having an intense desire for the salvation of sinners, he often spent, after the labors of the day, a great portion of the night in interceding with God on their behalf. He had traveled sixteen years as a preacher, and was not thirty-eight years old when he died. He had lived a large life in a short time.

The Conference obituary of 1833 records the disappearance of two of the greatest lights of Methodism, Adam Clarke and Richard Watson. They had been co-workers in the greatest interests of the Church for many years, and were separated by death less than five months. Clarke bore the burden of about sixty-five years when our present period began. Most of them had been years of extraordinary labors in the pulpit and in the study; his health was broken, and he was subject to frequent attacks of illness, but his generous and cheerful nature repined at nothing. He labored on zealously and hopefully as his strength would allow. He had sold his estate at Millbrook, and attempted to resume his labors in London, but was compelled again to retreat to the country. He purchased Haydon Hall, at Eastcott, where he erected a chapel for his family and neighbors, and whence he went forth on frequent preaching excursions to various parts of England, to Ireland, Scotland, and the Shetland Isles, pursuing meanwhile his literary labors with unabated ardor. In 1826 he completed the great task of his life, his Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. The termination of his forty years of labor on this work was an era in his old age. The historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire has recorded, in a memorable passage, the emotion with which he completed that unrivaled work, and, having penned its last sentence, walked in solitude the paths of his garden, at midnight, meditating on his finished achievement and his assured fame, while the light of the moon flooded the sublime Alpine scenery of Lake Leman around him. The venerable commentator had worked with a different motive. Having written the last line of his long task upon his knees, he cleared his large study table of its piles of antique folios, leaving but the Bible upon it, arranged his library, and, again bowing at the foot of his well-worn library steps, gave thanks to God that he had been enabled to contribute to the explanation and vindication of divine truth, and that the toils of years were ended. Imploring a blessing upon his completed task, he rose from his knees emancipated alike from his labor and from solicitude for human honor. Calling in his eldest son, he addressed the youth with deep feeling on the grateful fact. The day was a domestic jubilee at Haydon Hall; affectionate congratulatory ceremonies cheered the veteran scholar, and he turned from the labors of the past to enjoy the tranquil sunset of his long and useful life. His Commentary afforded him the pecuniary means of a comfortable livelihood and of liberal charities. Though superseded to some extent by the later progress of Biblical learning, it was a great work for its times. It procured him the consideration of the learned world, and incalculably promoted the critical knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in the Methodist ministry and among Methodists generally. Its superabundant erudition, though a fault, is the excess of an excellence. Its occasional eccentricities of opinion are mostly without serious liability, and, indeed, had they been designed to procure it attention and notoriety, (an artifice of which his noble and guileless nature was incapable,) they could hardly have been more successful. No commentary of his day had a wider circulation, and it may be justly said that notwithstanding its acknowledged defects, none in his day had better claims to at least the popular sway which it obtained. It is a monument of his scholarship, if not of his intellect, of astonishingly various and equally accurate if not equally profound learning; and to readers who, like his own ministerial brethren, had few opportunities for varied studies, its irrelevant erudition afforded a vast amount of general instruction, which they could not otherwise have attained. Its very defects, indeed, seem to have given it adaptation to its chief design.

The remainder of Clarke's life was filled with useful labors, and with enviable virtues and happiness, which would make it an agreeable self-indulgence to linger in his company longer than our limits will allow. His old friends and ministerial companions rapidly drop by his side into the grave; but his natural geniality and religious cheerfulness never fail. When seventy years old he writes that he has resolved to withdraw, as much as possible, from the cares and anxieties of public life, having grappled with them as long as the number of his years can well permit, and in this respect, he says, he has "a conscience as clear as a diamond, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he has had his conversation among men," and now feels that, with the necessaries and conveniences of life, he can cheerfully take up, in the wilderness, the lodging-place of a wayfaring man. "I no longer like strange company of any kind: not that I have fallen, or would fall out with the world; for, thank God, I feel nothing of the misanthrope. I am ready to spend and be spent for the salvation or good of men." The same year he writes in the album of a friend, and with the style of his favorite Oriental poets: "I have enjoyed the spring of life —I have endured the toils of its summer—I have culled the fruits of its autumn—I am now passing through the rigors of its winter; and am neither forsaken of God nor abandoned by man. I see at no great distance the dawn of a new day, the first of a spring that shall be eternal! It is advancing to meet me! I run to embrace it! Welcome! welcome! eternal spring! Halleluiah!" His generous Methodistic theology imbues more than ever his interpretations of Christianity and his opinions of the ministerial office. To his son, who was preparing for holy orders, he says: "After having now labored with a clear conscience for the space of fifty years, in preaching the salvation of God, through Christ, to thousands of souls, I can say, that is the most successful kind of preaching which exhibits and upholds, in the clearest and strongest light, the divine perfection and mercy of the infinitely compassionate and holy God to fallen man; which represents him to man's otherwise hopeless case, as compassionate as well as just—as slow to anger, as well as quick to mark iniquity. Tell then your hearers, not only that the conscience must be sprinkled, but that it was God himself who provided a Lamb! All false religions invariably endow the Infinite Being with attributes unfavorable to the present condition of men, with feelings inimical to their future felicity, and in opposition to their present good: such descriptions and attributes can never win man's confidence, and, as far as they are used and carried into the Christian ministry, are a broad libel upon the Almighty." His domestic life is an unmarred picture of affectionateness and felicity. His conversation if not humorous, is uniformly playful, abounding in fatherly counsel, in apt aphorisms, in quaint citations and learned allusions, with no other severity than a hearty disdain of all misanthropy. He occasionally publishes a volume of sermons, or some other work requiring no great labor, and is always welcomed with eagerness by the reading public. Eminent men of the learned and the religious worlds visit him at Haydon Hall. The Duke of Sussex, the best patron of learning and philanthropy which the royal family affords, delights to honor him in his rural home, and to receive him at Kensington Palace. He continues to preach habitually, and with his old fervor and success. Twice he makes voyages to his Shetland missions, preaching from island to island. He rejoices in the success of this his favorite project: almost every island has its Methodist society, and the grateful people greet him as their apostle. "O had I twenty years less of age and infirmity," he exclaims, among those northern rocks, where he preached at a latitude beyond which no sermon was that day delivered on the globe, "how gloriously might I be employed here. But I have had my time, and through mercy I have labored in my day and generation. I think I can say, with a clear conscience, I have not spared my strength in the work of the Lord." He makes repeated excursions to Ireland, not failing to revisit the scenes of his old home. He finds but few of the friends of his childhood remaining; but these few "were in raptures" to hear again his voice. Several of them, being blind with age, could not judge of his growth, and, in their simplicity and delight, accost him as the "little boy" who used to pray and exhort in their cottages. "They forgot," he says, "their own advance in life; forgot the sorrows and trials of fifty years, and talked with me in the same endearing strain and affectionate manner in which they were once accustomed to converse with the 'little boy.' Even the children, hearing their grandfathers and grandmothers talk thus, seemed at once to consider me as some one of the family that had been out on a journey for a long time, but was now returned home; and to me how delightful were this morning's visits!" In every house he prays with the family, and in many resumes the "exhortations" he had given them fifty years before. "What pleasing ideas," he writes, "are awakened in my mind while visiting these scenes of my boyish days, and passing by the places where I first heard the pure Gospel of the Son of God, and first saw a Methodist preacher; and especially when I entered that field where, after having passed through a long night of deep mental aud spiritual affliction, the peace of God was spoken to my heart, and his love shed abroad in it! I would give almost anything to buy that field where I found the heavenly treasure; but it is not to be sold. O it almost makes me young again to view these scenes!" He purchases a house at Port Stuart, intending to spend three months each summer amid these rejuvenating reminiscences. Ever eager to do good for his beloved but suffering country, he projects a system of schools for the north of Ireland. By his own liberality, and that of a few of his friends, six are established. They were soon followed with manifest effect on the morals of the people, and after his death were incorporated into the system of the Irish Methodist mission schools.

For a few years more he continues to preach constantly, especially at chapel "openings" and in behalf of missionary collections. In his seventy-second year he again visits Ireland, but is disqualified by his infirmities for his usual labors. "I have now," he writes as he returned, "such evidences of old age as I never had before. There is a Christ, there is redemption through his blood: I have this redemption, and I am waiting for the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus." He characteristically adds: "I feel a simple heart; the prayers of my childhood are yet precious to me, and the simple hymns which I sung when a child I sing now with unction and delight." He came back to die. In about two months he was cut off by the

Asiatic cholera which was then terrifying Europe. It was raging in England and Ireland. Daily in his household worship he prayed that "each and all of his family might be saved from its perils, or be prepared for sudden death." On the 25th of August, 1832, he began his prayer with the words, "We thank thee, O heavenly Father, that we have a blessed hope, through Christ, of entering into thy glory," and soon after set out in a chaise for Bayswater, where he had an appointment to preach the next day. There he was requested by a fellow-preacher to fix a time at which he would deliver a charity sermon. "I am not well," he replied; "I cannot fix a time; I must first see what God is about to do with me." The next morning, instead of preaching, he was struggling with the mighty pestilence. "Put your soul," said a friend, "in the hands of your God, and your trust in the merits of your Saviour." "I do, I do," responded the dying veteran, and that night entered into his eternal rest, in the seventy-second year of his age and the fiftieth of his itinerant ministry. The whole Methodist world mourned his death. The Conference honored him, in its Minutes, as "one of the great men of his age." "No man," it said, "in any age of the Church, was ever known, for so long a period, to have attracted larger audiences; no herald of salvation ever sounded forth his message with greater faithfulness or fervor, and few ministers of the Gospel, in modern times, have been more honored by the extraordinary unction of the Holy Spirit in their ministrations. To this unction chiefly, though associated with uncommon talents, must be attributed the wonderful success and popularity of his discourses. In preaching he had the happy art of combining great originality and depth of subject with the utmost plainness of speech and manner. Nor was this simplicity at all destroyed, but rather augmented by the glow and animation of his soul when applying the offer of salvation to all within the sound of his voice, and reasoning strongly on the grand and vital doctrines of the Gospel. Energy, indeed, was one very peculiar characteristic of his mind. Nor was he less remarkable for sensibility, and all the tenderness and sympathy of an affectionate disposition. He could be 'gentle, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;' yet, when environed with great difficulties in the prosecution of his noble objects, he seemed, from the extraordinary vigor and determined purpose of his soul, to conquer them with ease. His moral character was above all suspicion and above all praise. In this particular no cloud, no speck was ever seen to darken the horizon of his life."

The ministerial and literary services of Richard Watson have already been sketched at some length. In 1826 he was elected to the presidency of the Conference, the single instance in which he was honored with that appointment; but never were its duties discharged with greater effectiveness or dignity. His sermon to the Conference was one of the noblest of his noble mind, and produced a vivid impression. His presidential functions, during the ensuing year, were onerous, especially for his enfeebled health; but he still prosecuted his literary toils, publishing the fourth part of his Theological Institutes, visiting Scotland and Ireland, and delivering numerous sermons and addresses in behalf of missions. He retained the secretaryship of the Missionary Society, and, before his presidential term ended wrote its report for 1827, a document of extraordinary eloquence. His comprehensive mind was imbued with the sublime conception of the universal mission of Methodism, and it was one of the chief labors of his public life to imbue the whole denomination with it. He reviewed in the Report of 1827 the triumphant progress of missions within the preceding half century, "in the rekindling of those lamps of evangelical truth in the Protestant Churches of the Continent which had been so long extinguished, and the stirring of the once mighty spirit of the Reformation, so long rocked to slumber by a false and insidious philosophy; in the visitation of the regions of slavery and degradation by the commiserations, the consolations, and the better hopes of Christianity; in the introduction of religion into the regions of

Africa, where she has led up, in her train, agriculture, and arts, and laws, and literally converted 'the desert into a fruitful field,' and Hottentot kraals into Christian villages, with their schools of learning, and their humble but consecrated temples of worship; in the triumphs of the merciful spirit of the Gospel over the sanguinary habits of the savages of the South Seas; in the impression made upon the closely compacted idolatry and the obstacle of caste in India." He pointed to the still deplorable condition of much of the foreign world. "Our colonies," he said, "carry us to the scene; our commerce wafts us to it; our enterprising travelers expand it before us in its length and breadth of wretchedness; and, what is more, the empire of our country opens the high road to the march of our practical compassion, and thus, by giving us the 'opportunity' to 'do good,' literally, to almost 'all men,' renders that the high vocation of British Christians, and binds it upon us as one of our most solemn duties." With an earnestness which glows into rapt eloquence, he calls upon the Church to everywhere renew and augment its missionary efforts. "We shall then," he adds, "see bands of holy men in greater number and frequency leave our shores, to undertake labors for Christ and the souls of men, more arduous, more lofty, and more distant; we shall trace them, as they push their unstained and noiseless conquests deeper and wider into the yet unpenetrated empires of superstition and idolatry, into the central regions of Africa, now for the first time opening to the distant view of Christendom; to those seats of eternal ice and regions of storm which, as they witnessed the unshrinking courage of the British mariner, shall be braved as nobly by the breast of the British missionary; into those yet unpenetrated living masses of immortal men which thicken in the teeming countries of the East, where superstition first began to wield her fearful scepter, and where it shall fall powerless and shivered from her hand amid the shouts of liberated millions. While we live on earth, if we are faithful to our high vocation, we shall pursue these hallowed triumphs; and we shall leave this work in unimpaired energy, to hasten on that result which shall stamp the seal of eternal truth upon every jot and title of the sacred volume; to brighten the splendor of the prophetic page into still more glorious history, and to fulfill 'that mystery of God,' that consummation over which earth with all her tongues, and heaven with all her choirs beatified, shall roll the triumphant notes and the lofty swell of the final anthem: 'Halleluiah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'" Having sustained the office of resident Missionary Secretary during six years, the longest term allowed by the rules of the Conference, at the expiration of his presidential office in 1827 he was appointed to the Manchester circuit. He resumed the pastoral work with his wonted energy; and though he was employed in completing the third volume of his "Institutes," he was sedulous in all his circuit duties, preaching not only on Sundays, but on week nights, visiting from house to house, especially the sick, and guiding the youth of his congregations. The prayer-meeting was prized by him as one of the best auxiliaries to the pulpit. "To everything like rant in the worship of God," says his biographer, "he was strenuously and from principle opposed; yet he often greatly rejoiced at such meetings to hear the language of agonizing and scriptural supplication flow from the lips and hearts of poor and unlearned men, of the depth of whose piety he had satisfactory proof."

The completion of his Theological Institutes in 1828 was an important event, not only in his personal history, but in the history of the denomination. That work presented to the world a scientific exhibition of Methodistic theology, and is one of the most elaborate and thorough bodies of divinity produced in our century. Though thoroughly Arminian, its candor and vigorous logic have secured it the admiration of Calvinistic theologians.[6] Seldom has a more profound, a more philosophic mind grappled with the great problems of revealed religion; and the student feels assured, as he pores over the pages of these volumes, that he is consulting an intellect as candid, as liberal, as authoritative, as supreme, as he can find in the whole range of modern theological inquiry. The work is not without palpable defects; it has negligences of style, its elaborate diction is hardly redeemed by its close condensation, nor its superabundant quotations by the fact that its many borrowed pages are usually the finest metal of the best old English writers. It is deficient in its treatment of the abundant arguments for and against revelation, which have been drawn from the late progress of the natural sciences, but this is a defect which was scarcely avoidable at the day of its publication. The natural loftiness of the genius of its author characterizes many of his pages, notwithstanding the rigors of a philosophic and scientific composition. For more than a generation the Institutes have been the text-book of the theological training of the Methodist ministry throughout the world. Their advantage in this respect has been incalculable, not only as it regards Methodism, but as affecting our common Protestantism. All the other labors of Richard Watson sink into insignificance when compared with this sublime mission of theological education to tens of thousands of the most energetic preachers of Christianity in the nineteenth century.

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[6] Rev. Dr. J. W. Alexander, of Princeton College, ("Forty Years of Familiar Letters, etc.,"—letter of Dec. 26, 1831,) says: "Turretine is, in theology, *instar omnium;* that is, so far forth as Blackstone is in law

Abundant in these great labors and in pastoral duties, he was ever ready for any more exigent service of the Church. While he was on the Manchester circuit a serious dissension arose on the Leeds circuit. The Conference had permitted the trustees of a new chapel in that town to erect an organ, which was made the occasion of hostile proceed-

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Making due allowance for the difference of age, Watson, the Methodist, is the only systematizer, within my knowledge, who approaches the same eminence; of whom I use Addison's words: 'He reasons like Paley, and descants like Hall.'"

ings by a large party, who, for other reasons, had been opposed to the government of the Connection. The controversy became violent; it spread to the metropolis and to other parts of the country, and threatened another disastrous schism. Bunting, Newton, and several other ministerial leaders were assailed in publications. Watson issued an unanswerable defense of the ecclesiastical system of the denomination,[6] so clear and convincing in its exposition, and so affectionate in its spirit as, in connection with publications by Daniel Isaac, to entirely defeat the design of the dissentients, who undoubtedly aimed at a general secession from the Connection. His pre-eminent standing in the Church attracted much attention to this publication. Thousands of copies were speedily sold, and it not only tended to allay the new agitation, but presented such an explanation of the Methodist system generally as to fortify it greatly in the public regard. He devoted himself assiduously to other literary works, his Conversations for the Young, his Biblical and Theological Dictionary, his Life of Wesley. He frequently appeared as a platform advocate of the great religious and philanthropic enterprises of the times, missions, schools, emancipation. He was removed to the City Road circuit, London, in 1829, but after sustaining its pastoral duties with pre-eminent ability for three years, his health, always feeble, was so prostrated that he was compelled to retire from pastoral labors, and was appointed resident Secretary of the Missionary Society. In 1832 his constitution began to break up, and it was apparent that his splendid career was about to end. On the 28th of October he preached his last sermon; his emaciated aspect deeply affected the congregation when he appeared in the pulpit; he seemed, however, to forget his feebleness as he proceeded in his discourse, and spoke with all his usual pathos and power, leaving a deep impression on the assembly. During the next month his health rapidly declined. He saw that he could not finish his Exposition of the New Testament; he had written it as far as the twelfth chapter of Luke; he now passed the remaining part of Luke, as also John and the Acts of the Apostles, in order to attempt yet what he deemed the most important part of his task, the Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans; but the pen fell from his disabled hand when he had written his note on chapter three, verses twenty-two and twenty-three. He endured excruciating pains, his face wore the impress of his agony, but his patience and resignation were immovable. "Dying and death," he said "are distinct things; there is something gloomy in and melancholy about dying; whereas death is nothing, but as it opens the way to glory!" "I seem," he added, "like a worm, creeping into the glory of God and coming before the throne." "Good is the will of the Lord. Remember this is my testimony," he said to his medical attendant, as he came out of one of his terrible paroxysms of pain. "I shall see God," he exclaimed at another time. "I, I individually, I myself, a poor worm of the earth, shall see God! How shall I sufficiently praise him!" "A poor worm of the earth." "My blessed Saviour!" "My blessed Jesus!" "How wonderful the plan of redemption by Christ;" were expressions constantly on his lips. Frequently were the tears seen flowing from his eyes, and he was thankful for every little attention that was paid to him; observing, "I do not deserve it. Why is it that I have so much kindness shown me? You must love me; and I know there is no burden in love." At one time, being in great suffering, he said, "O how much labor and pain it costs to unroof this house; to take down this tabernacle, and to set the spirit free! When shall my soul leave this tenement of clay! I long to quit this little abode, gain the wide expanse of the skies, rise to nobler joys, and see God." In a state of ecstasy, he broke forth, a short time before he lost the power of connected speech, exclaiming, "We shall see strange sights some day; not different, however, from what we might realize by faith. But it is not this, not the glitter and glory, not the diamond and topaz; no, it is God; he is all, and in all!" His last three or four days were mercifully attended with almost entire insensibility, and, without apparent pain, his lethargy deepened into the tranquil sleep of death. The Conference recorded his decease in their Minutes, with a long and most eulogistic notice. "His great abilities," they say "first excited general attention by the part which he took in promoting the missionary cause; and his sermons and speeches for that purpose, with his sermons on other particular occasions, may be ranked with the most splendid that ever mind conceived or tongue uttered. His regular ministry in a circuit, though adapted to more ordinary use, was not inferior to his occasional efforts. There was in him a rich fullness of evangelical truth; he arranged it with uncommon readiness; and he dispensed it with a liberality which never feared exhaustion: while his extensive acquaintance with ancient learning and modern science, and his susceptibility of impression from the scenes of nature, enabled him to illustrate and adorn his preaching with singular felicity. To the reasoning powers and habits of a philosopher, he united the imagination of a poet; the most familiar topics of Christian theology appeared with new beauty and force when set in the light of his genius."

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[6] An Affectionate Address to those Trustees, etc., of the London South circuit, whose names are affixed to certain resolutions, bearing date September 23d, 1828.

The Minutes of the next year record the deaths of Dr. James Townley, Daniel Isaac, and Duncan M'Allum, all men of commanding abilities. Townley and M'Allum have already been briefly sketched in our narrative.[7] Daniel Isaac is known as the Wesleyan "Polemic Divine." He was born at Caythorpe, in Lincolnshire, July 7th, 1778.[8] In his childhood he gave himself with avidity to books, and showed an extraordinary capacity for polemic inquiries.

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[7] See vol. ii, p. 177, and the present volume, p. 79.

[8] Everett's Polemic Divine; or, Memoirs, etc., of Rev. Daniel Isaac, p. 4. London, 1839.

He became a school-usher, undertook a school of his own, attempted to learn the art of weaving, but found no secular employment compatible with his peculiar genius. Being converted in his nineteenth year, he devoted himself with ardor to his religious duties. He became a class-leader, a local preacher, and, in 1800, was called out to supply a vacancy on the Grimsby circuit. During thirty-two years he was a successful itinerant, and occupied, with eminent ability, some of the most important appointments of the Connection. His intellect was subtle and vigorous, and delighted to grapple with theological difficulties. He was generous, affable, and sincere. His preaching showed much originality, rare perspicuity on the most intricate subjects, a frank, bold, and direct treatment of theological problems. His manner in the pulpit was peculiar; he regarded not the artifices of oratory, but had nevertheless "a charm which," say the Minutes, "held his audience in mute and excited attention." His brethren admit that he had defects; but the greatest one which they seem able to allege was his "turn for the humorous and sarcastic, indulged occasionally to an extreme," a fault or talent to which many of the devoutest and ablest of the early Methodist preachers were inveterately addicted. The obituary pronounces him, however, a faithful expositor "of God's holy word, reasoning out of the Scriptures" with a clearness and cogency which few could resist. He wrote many books, all of which are controversial; some of them have merit which must cause them long to survive their author. His Treatise on "Universal Restoration," his "Baptism Discussed," "Sermons on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ," "Ecclesiastical Claims," his pamphlets respecting the "Protestant Methodists" in the Leeds organ controversy, and other publications, together with numerous articles in periodicals, reveal his extraordinary controversial powers, and secured him a peculiar reputation among his brethren. On Sunday, May 20th, 1832, he was in Manchester, for the purpose of preaching in behalf of a Sunday school, when he was seized with paralysis, from the effects of which he never recovered. At the following Conference he was so far restored that he was sent for the third time to his old and favorite station, the York circuit; but he only preached once or twice, and then sunk, the helpless victim of a disease which no art could remove, and which no attentions could assuage. He suffered the usual depression of this deplorable malady, but his faith was steadfast. "I will delight myself in the Lord," he would sometimes exclaim. Expecting from day to day another and fatal stroke of paralysis, he seldom rose in the morning without saying, "Thank God, I am spared another night." Often he would exclaim, while leaning on the mantel-piece, in order to relieve himself from the unpleasant feeling of sitting, "Lord, help me; Lord, help me." At other times a ray of light from heaven would penetrate the gloom, and he would say, "The Lord is mine, and I am his!" The long and affecting struggle between a mind naturally active and vigorous, and a body worn out by an incurable disease, terminated in his happy death, on Friday, March 21, 1834. Although the event had been long expected, it produced a great sensation; and his funeral, which took place on the following Thursday, served to show that his friends in York and its neighborhood had not lost their recollection of his worth; a long train of voluntary mourners giving to the solemnity an unusual and affecting interest.[8] He had been thirty-seven years a Methodist, and thirty-five an itinerant preacher.

In the Minutes of 1836 the Conference mourns, with peculiar emphasis, the loss of another of its ablest men, David M'Nicoll, "one of the bright luminaries of the Connection," an "eminent man," who combined the accomplishments of an elegant mind with the purest graces of character and of manners. The obituary says that he possessed an intellect of varied and extraordinary capacity, combining strength, acuteness, taste, and imagination in a rare degree; that his attainments were in harmony with his powers; that few men in the Connection were more entirely devoted to the acquisition of different branches of knowledge; that his reading was immense; that the stores of his mind, the vigor of his intellect, and the copiousness of his discourses, corresponded to the ardor and constancy of his industry; that though he allowed himself, occasionally, to range in the fields of general literature and science, his strength was devoted to the attainment of theological knowledge, and that in this department his scheme of study embraced the whole range of revealed truth; that from the treasures of every age he drew to his aid the invaluable elucidations of divine truth, which have been so amply furnished by the piety and wisdom of the Church; that his public ministry was uniformly experimental and practical; that in his discourses, copiousness, energy, and beauty of illustration, were happily combined with profound views of Biblical truth; and while, in his ordinary ministry, he was an edifying preacher, his occasional and extraordinary efforts raised him to the rank of a deserved and almost universal popularity in the Connection; that he maintained the divine life in his own soul by seeking and cherishing the influences of the Holy Spirit, and lived in constant intercourse with the spiritual world. Born of Methodist parents, he was trained from infancy in habits of piety. In his childhood he was addicted to fervent prayer, and he appears to have passed, by the gradual growth of his early piety, into the full maturity of Christian character without any sudden crisis of religious experience. When about twenty years of age he began to preach with much acceptance in Dundee, his native town. The first two years of his itinerant ministry were spent in Edinburgh and Glasgow; in the former he enjoyed special advantages from the high religious character and intelligence of the members of the Methodist Society. His ministerial colleague there says: "Our society in Edinburgh was then small, but it was very select; and our congregations were good. Among our friends and communicants we numbered the Hon. Miss Napier, sister of the then Lord High Commissioner, the Right Hon. Lady Helen Dalrymple, Lady Maxwell, and many others who, though not titled, were highly respectable. The superintendent, his wife, and colleagues, and several other persons, had the happiness of meeting in band with Lady Maxwell, once a week, at her own house. We then had the honor to dine with her ladyship, in company with such other ministers and people of various denominations, and from different parts of the world, as her ladyship chose to invite from week to week. After dinner we spent an hour or two in religious conversation, led chiefly by her ladyship, whose deep piety, dignified manners, benignity of temper, and extraordinary conversational powers I have never seen equaled from that day to this; nor do I expect to till I meet her among the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven. Such connections, while they tended greatly to the edification of all the parties, were also the means of promoting the usefulness of the preachers in the city and its vicinity; and though I would not undervalue the direct influence of Methodism in Scotland, either in present or former times, yet I cannot avoid thinking that, at least in olden times, its indirect influence was great and salutary. Such, too, I remember, was the opinion of one of the greatest and best of the Presbyterian clergymen of those days. The year Mr. M'Nicoll spent in Edinburgh had a decided influence on his future life and character, in another respect: God had given him a taste and capacity for searching out and intermeddling with all knowledge; and here his natural curiosity was admirably suited and excited, all his dormant but gigantic powers roused. He assiduously ransacked all accessible sources of information, and vastly enlarged the stock of his previous knowledge; and, at the same time, stretched far wider his capacity for future accumulations. He received also, in that happy year, a deeper baptism of the Holy Ghost, and his ministry was attended by a divine unction."

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[8] Minutes, vol. vii, p. 344.

While attending the Conference at Leeds, in order to be received into full membership, he preached a sermon of such uncommon ability that Adam Clarke asked for his appointment to London as his colleague. He resided there in Clarke's own home, and received his aid in study and ministerial preparation. He became one of the most effective and most popular preachers of the denomination, and for about thirty-four years honored and promoted it by his pre-eminent talents. His death was sudden. He had spent a week, preaching for the Missionary Society, in a distant part of the country, and returned home on Saturday evening, June 4th, 1836, to occupy his own pulpit on the morrow. "He was peculiarly happy," says his biographer, "on the evening of his decease, in the bosom of his family. His elder son had come home on a visit, and one or two younger children from the schools, and, by a merciful arrangement of Providence, the whole eleven were present. With smiles of delight, he beheld them around his table; spoke freely and cheerfully to them; and then, in the spirit of the patriarch Jacob, when he leaned on his staff, and blessed his children before he died, he knelt down, entered into their several cases, earnestly and pathetically besought the divine blessing on them, commended them to his care and love, went up stairs, and in a few moments expired."[9] His writings justify the high encomium of the Minutes on his intellect; they comprise "An Essay on Covetousness," "A Rational Inquiry on the Influence of the Stage on the Morals of Society," "The Substance of an Argument to prove the Truth of the Bible," eight sermons, miscellaneous essays on "Taste in its Connections with Religion and Morality," on the "Influence of God in the Government of the World," and on "Inspiration," together with "Poetical Remains."

Many other laborers, some of whom have already appeared in our pages, are enumerated on the obituary roll of this period: in 1825 the veteran William Hunter, who preached more than forty years, and died exclaiming, "I long to be gone, I long to be gone, that I may enter into my Father's house!" William Warrener, the West India missionary, who, after a ministry of forty-seven years, departed "triumphing gloriously over death," and William Threlfall and Jacob Links, the South African martyrs; in 1828 William Myles, the first historian of Methodism, who was more than half a century in the itineracy, and William Barber, who fell by pestilence at the Mission of Gibraltar; in 1830 Owen Davies, the Welsh missionary; Zechariah Yewdall, more than fifty years a preacher, who expired shouting, "God is love! Jesus is precious! I am going to God!" William Jenkin, an old evangelist in the West Indies; and Joseph Taylor, one of Wesley's heroes, fifty-three years a preacher, who said before his departure, "God is with me, he never leaves me; I can talk of nothing but the love of Christ;" in 1831 John Stamp, another of Wesley's "helpers," who, after forty-five years of ministerial life, died exclaiming, "All is well!" in 1832 John James, a man of eminent abilities, and for five years Missionary Secretary, and George Whitefield, for many years Wesley's faithful "Book Steward" in London; in 1833 Titus Close, the East India missionary, who died "giving glory to God," and Joseph Chapman, who departed shouting, "Glory, glory! victory, victory!" in 1834 William Buckley Fox, a missionary to Ceylon, and one of the best Orientalists of his day; and William Hicks, who, after forty years' labors, went to heaven saying, "I do not die; I depart;" in 1835 Joseph Robinson who, after about thirty years' itinerant labors, fell asleep, saying, "I am going to Jesus;" Anthony B. Seckerson, who traveled more than forty years, and died declaring, "I feel I have firm footing;" William Black, the patriarch of Methodism in Nova Scotia, who departed saying, "All is well! all is peace! I shall soon be in the glory to which Christ has gone before me!"[10] in 1835 Valentine Ward, a conspicuous laborer in England, Ireland, and the West Indies; and James Sydserff, thirty-three years an itinerant, who as he was sinking under disease said, "I soon shall be in glory!" William Harrison, who, after nearly forty years in the itineracy, died affirming, "I stand upon the rock!" Joseph R. Dunwell, whom we have seen sacrificing his life on the Gold Coast, and who, dying of the pestilence, left as the last entry in his journal, "In life as in death, I am the Lord's!" and John Price, who fell a missionary in the West Indies, shouting in his last hour, "Happy! happy! happy! though I die I shall live!" in 1836 Richard Gower, forty-four years a traveling preacher, and who left as his testimony the declaration, "My God, my Saviour, my intercessor, my Redeemer, has washed me from my sins in his blood;" John Wilson Pipe, a good scholar and faithful laborer, whose last utterance was, "I am upon the rock, Christ, only Christ;" Thomas Rogerson, who, after nearly half a century in the ministry, died saying, "All is right, all is well!" and Thomas Osborn, who departed declaring, "I shall go down to the grave with a smile, and ascend with a shout!" in 1837 Joshua Marsden, a man of effective services during thirty-seven years of itinerant life; and in 1839 more than thirty others, among whom were Gideon Ouseley, Andrew Hamilton, John Gaulter, Philip Hardcastle, and other veterans, who, amid the joyful preparations of the Church for the celebration of its hundredth year, ascended to the "Church triumphant."

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[9] M'Nicoll's Works with Mem., etc., by James Dixon, D.D., p. 68. London, 1837.

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[10] See vol. ii, book v, chap. 11.

Meanwhile many of the representative laymen of the denomination were disappearing from its ranks, and accompanying their departing pastors into the "rest that remaineth to the people of God." Butterworth died in 1826. He had been successful in business, had served his country in Parliament, was revered generally as a philanthropist, had been a class-leader for nearly thirty years, a promoter of Sunday schools, Treasurer of the Missionary Society and Chairman of the Annual Missionary Meeting for many years, a chief supporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and, above all, a genuine Christian. The whole Methodist Connection felt that in his death it suffered an inestimable loss. At the time of his funeral in London, Dover, which he had represented in Parliament, closed all its shops, as on the Sabbath, and tolled its bells a chief part of the day. Watson, in an eloquent sermon, worthy alike of himself and his subject, describes him as almost perfect in his personal, social, and public life. The Conference inserted a notice of him in its Minutes, remarking "that they could not make this record without expressing their deep sense of the zeal, attention, and liberality with which he fulfilled the duties of General Missionary Treasurer, as well as of the distinguished excellences of his general character. The large advances of money which he often cheerfully made to the Missionary Society, without interest, when its funds were under temporary pressure; the spiritual and interesting manner in which, when called to the chair of its annual meetings, he conducted the proceedings of that society; his exertions in visiting many of the auxiliary and branch societies in the country, by which he consecrated the influence of his name and station to advance the interests of missions; and the advantages which the committee derived from his judgment and counsels, and from the information which his extensive correspondence and connections enabled him to communicate, are subjects of grateful but affecting recollection. By his efforts, in Parliament, in favor of religious liberty, and the zealous manner in which he exerted himself when applications to His Majesty's government were rendered necessary in order to obtain protection for the missionaries in the colonies, and to procure the modification or disallowance of restrictive or persecuting laws, the Connection was laid under additional obligations. Nor was there anything which related to the stability, extension, or success of the Wesleyan missions into which he did not enter with an affectionate and constant interest. Great is the loss which the Missionary Society has sustained by this bereavement."

His friend and associate in the Church, in Parliament, and in the Missionary Society, and other philanthropic enterprises of the times, Thomas Thompson, of Hull, followed him to heaven in 1828. Banker, statesman, philanthropist, his character was crowned as a Methodist, a Christian. His services to the denomination have already been frequently noticed. His influence was eminently salutary in the agitations which followed Wesley's death; he presided at the convention of laymen which, jointly with the Conference of 1797, settled the government of the Church and restored its harmony preparatory to the development of its missionary energy. He was a leader in its subsequent missionary plans, presiding at the organization of its first Missionary Society, at Leeds, and at the first meeting of its General Missionary Society, in London, in 1818. He was many years Missionary Treasurer, and an effective manager of the Society. He died on the 14th of September, at the Hotel Maurice, in Paris, and was buried in the cemetery of Père la Chaise. The next Conference honored him with a special notice in its Minutes, and the missionary committee recorded in its Journal that "he was a munificent contributor to the missions; a steady, consistent, and persevering supporter of Methodism at large, for more than half a century, by his pen, his property, his influence, and his example; in Parliament, an active and useful advocate of the great interests of Christianity, especially at the period when the concession of legal facilities for the propagation of the Gospel by missionary establishments in British India, became the subject of legislative discussion; and, on all occasions, the decided and avowed friend of religion, and of its upright professors."

Samuel Drew, who had risen, as we have seen, from the shoemaker's bench to an honorable distinction, was borne to the grave, by the Methodists of Cornwall, in 1833. At the instance of Adam Clarke, who directed the public attention to his singular genius, and whose generous interest for his friends was exhaustless, Drew had removed to Liverpool, and thence to

London, where he found abundant literary employment. He was editor of the Imperial Magazine, and a contributor to other periodicals. His metaphysical treatises commanded the respect, if not the concurrence, of men addicted to such studies. He was honored with the title of Master of Arts; and with the offer of a professorship in the London University, which he declined. He did much direct service for Methodism, not only as an able local preacher, but by pamphlets in its defense against literary opposers; he edited, and, it is supposed, wrote most of the Commentary and other works of Coke, and gave to the Church an excellent biography of the bishop. His health at last broke down under his labors in London; the sudden death of his old and steadfast friend, Adam Clarke, was "a stroke from which he seemed unable to recover," and he returned to Cornwall to die. His disease affected his mind, but his religious faith and hope were sustained. On the night of the 28th of March he exclaimed, "Thank God, to-morrow I shall join the glorious company above!" The presentiment was true; he sank tranquilly and unconsciously into death before the close of the next day.

Samuel Hick, the "Village Blacksmith," entered upon the present period an old man, but as young as ever in the energy of his zeal and his labors. The missionary spirit of the Church was an inextinguishable inspiration to him, and the missionary platform was his best arena. It was in 1826 that he gave up his laborious craft, having secured a humble competence, and devoted himself entirely to Christian labors, going to and fro in the Connection, making missionary speeches, "opening" new churches, and preaching, indoors and out of doors, as he found opportunity—a Home Missionary, as his biographer calls him. Mounting his old and trusty horse, which had served him for years in his evangelical adventures, and which seemed to share its master's consciousness of the good work they were pursuing, he went forth into remote, often to neglected parts of the country, and seldom without rousing the whole region round about with religious interest. Frequently in these excursions his pockets were exhausted, and he knew not how he was to pay the charge of the next toll-gate, or where he was to find a lodging for himself and his faithful war-steed at night. But if a momentary distrust came over him at such times, he treated it bravely as a temptation of the "great adversary;" despondence he never knew. In such, or worse difficulties, he treated the adversary as he treated his human opposers, with his characteristic but devout humor. "I shaped him his answer," observed the zealous blacksmith on one of these occasions, and said, in his Yorkshire dialect, "Devil, I never *stack* fast yet." As he went on his way he overtook a traveler, who became so interested in his conversation that, without knowing his present necessity, the admiring stranger parted from him with the gift of a five pound note. "This was a fair salvation from the Lord," says the evangelist; "I cried for joy all the way as I went down the lonesome lanes." He and his horse fared well that night; and so repeated were such instances of relief with him, that he came at last to believe that Divine Providence would always take care of such matters while he failed not of his duty; never suspecting that Providence made use, for the purpose, of his own reputation for generosity and self-sacrifice, or of that peculiar effect with which his appearance and conversation touched and liberalized all hearts around him. In the city, in the village, in the pulpit, on the platform, in the love-feast, and especially in the prayer-meeting, he was always at home, laboring with an ease, an aptitude, and a success which made him the favorite of not only the common people, but of cultivated minds which could appreciate his genius and his pure and unique character. His sermons seldom extended beyond half an hour, for the prayer-meeting must follow every discourse, and the prayer-meeting was to him the reaping of the harvest. "These meetings," says his biographer, "furnished him very often with a knowledge of the progress of the word of life, as the benefits received under preaching were more fully developed in them, as well as cherished by the intercessory prayers of the faithful."

Having the unction of the Holy One, he was enabled to proceed in his work with cheerfulness, and very often carried with him a commanding authority over the feelings and conduct of others. He was frequently under high excitation; so much so, indeed, as sometimes to overpower his physical energies. "O," said he to a friend, after a missionary meeting at Howden, in which he had pleaded the cause of the heathen on the platform till he was nearly exhausted—"O, I am so happy! I shall surely die some of these times!" On another occasion, when at Pontefract, he remarked to a friend, after the meeting, with ecstatic feeling, and in his own peculiarly expressive language, "I felt as though I should have *swelted* [melted] away to heaven." His strong, but always genial emotions gave animation and effect to all his public services; and if the occasion was at any time deadened by a phlegmatic or an irrelevantly elaborate speaker, it was sure to be redeemed and vivified when Hick rose to pour forth his electrical thoughts, his mixed and irresistible emotions of piety and humor.

Three years more did the "Village Blacksmith" go up and down the land doing good; and wherever he went "traces of him," says his biographer, "were invariably found in the conversations of the people; his works and his walk left as distinct an impression upon the mind as the print of the human foot to the eye, after a person has crossed the sand of the seashore." At last, when more than seventy years old, he went home to die. On his death-bed a friend asked him, "What must we say to your friends who inquire after you?" "Tell them that I have all packed up; that I am still in the old ship, with my anchor cast within the vail, and that my sails are up, filled with a heavenly breeze. In a short time I shall be launched into the heavenly ocean." On the night of November 9, 1829, he said, "I am going," and died.

During several of these years William Carvosso continued his lay apostleship in Cornwall. His usefulness was hardly diminished by the infirmities of extreme age. His visitations to the various circuits and appointments had made him well known, and always welcome, to much of the large county, and wherever he went it seemed impossible that the Churches should not be revived. From congregation to congregation, from street to street, from house to house, the venerable old man bore his colloquial ministrations. At last, in his eighty-fifth year, he laid down to die. His disease was a local complaint, incident to old age, and inexpressibly painful; one that destroys existence mostly by the effect of pain itself, exhausting the constitution, and gradually consuming life. If he had died of fire, beginning with the hand and burning onward slowly, till the consuming process had invaded the vital functions, he could scarcely have suffered more; and yet his faith bore him up as on the pinions of an archangel. One of the last scenes of his life is thus described by his son, a Wesleyan preacher: "This morning early I was sent for to attend my father, who had been taken much worse during the night. I found him in great bodily suffering. Since I saw him on Wednesday he had drunk deep of the bitter cup. The sight was very distressing to those about him. At ten in the morning he was seized with a convulsive fit. We then thought the mortal affliction was past; but, after lying in a state of insensibility about four hours, he again awoke up in a suffering world, but with a blessed increase of the earnest of heaven in his soul. For several successive hours he exhibited, in lively conversation, all the triumph of faith. With a countenance illuminated with holy joy, and in a tone and emphasis not to be described, he exclaimed, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day.' Never before did I hear this beautiful passage quoted and applied so appropriately and feel ingly. Every clause seemed living truth, exhibiting all the freshness of 'the tender grass springing out of earth by the clear shining after rain.' 'I speak not boastingly,' he said; 'I am a sinner saved by grace, the chief of sinners, for whom Jesus died. I have no doubt, no fear; all is calm within; perfect love casteth out fear. I shall soon be with Jesus.' He then adverted to the assurance of faith, and strongly insisted on the Christian's privilege to retain the indubitable evidence; observing that God's word says, 'We know that all things work together for good;' and again, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;' not *we hope*, *we trust*, but 'we know.' Highly to our edification and joy, we now beheld the veteran Christian warrior in the bottom of the burning fiery furnace, clapping his hands amid the flame, and triumphing and glorying in his great deliverer. O it was good to be there! I would not have been absent on any account. Truly it was a place 'privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven.' I had long seen my dear father doing, I now saw him suffering, the will of God. While we knelt round his bed in prayer, we felt the presence of God in an extraordinary manner. Glory be to God!"

An old fellow-pilgrim calls on him: they never expect to see each other again in the flesh; their hearts melt, but "while they talk over past and present mercies, they seem to mount high in the chariot of Aminadab, and my father," says the son, "was 'lost in wonder, love, and praise!'"

The end was at hand. He had a prodigious strength of constitution, but the consuming agony shakes and baffles it, yet the song of deliverance is on his lips. His son writes: "My dear afflicted father is now evidently fast sinking in the outward man, but his confidence in Jehovah is steadfast, unmovable. The heat of the furnace still increases, and nothing short of an Abrahamic faith can support the strong, commanding evidence' of God's unchanging love. But he is unburned in the fire, and appears to beholders a blessed monument of the power of religion. With tears, and his own indescribable emphasis, he repeated those beautiful verses:

'Though waves and storms go o'er my head;
  Though strength, and health, and friends, be gone;
Though joys be withered all and dead,
  And every comfort be withdrawn;
On this my steadfast soul relies,
Father, thy mercy never dies.

'Fixed on this ground will I remain,
  Though my heart fail and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain
  When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.'

"Never, since the commencement of his affliction, have I seen him so exceedingly far lifted above himself. At times, for hours together, he is sustained in the highest Christian triumph; when no language of sacred poetry, or of the Scriptures, appears too strong to afford expression to the vivid feelings of his full heart."

At last the keen agony ends, the aged saint departs. He speaks of his funeral; he loses the power of speech; it returns again for a few minutes; his friends bow around him in prayer; he responds with animation; he pronounces a benediction on them when they rise, and now "gathering up his feet" to go, he sings, with his expiring breath, the doxology,

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

But his voice fails before the chorus is through. A friend at his bedside speaks of the uplifted hand as a not unusual signal of victory in death, when all other power of expression is gone. The arm of the dying veteran rises, and he is gone. So triumphed in death William Carvosso, in the eighty-fifth year of his life and the sixty-fourth of his religious pilgrimage, as perfect an example of lay Christian life and usefulness as the annals of Methodism afford; an example, as has been affirmed, of what was probably the best lay life of the apostolic Church. There can be no just explanation of the extraordinary success of Methodism without such illustrations. It was powerful in its more public laborers and functions, but it endeavored to raise up in all its localities a zealous working laity, and by its prayer-leaders, class-leaders, exhorters, and local preachers, it deepened and widened its local foundations, both at home and in its missions. It derived, perhaps, more than half its energy from such agencies; without them all others would have been comparatively ineffective. The preachers, two or three of whom supplied twenty, thirty, or fifty congregations, were present to-day and away to-morrow; but the local means of grace went on, the local preachers supplied the pulpits in the absence of the itinerants, the class-leaders supplied an effective pastoral supervision; the prayer-leaders kept the villages, the towns, the counties alive with social devotions; and thousands, ten of thousands of laymen were, like Carvosso, effective home missionaries, preaching Christianity with colloquial simplicity, but with divine power, from house to house. It was impossible that a system so practical, so popular in its adaptation, availing itself of every energy of its people, and applying this energy in every opportunity, could fail to permeate the whole community, to elicit obscure and original talent, to raise up extraordinary public men, to diffuse through the growing hosts of its people a common sentiment of unity and co-operation for its common ends, and to demonstrate itself in irresistible energies and grand aggregate results. And now that we approach its hundreth year and see it intrenching itself in most of the ends of the earth, pervading the whole Anglo-Saxon world, fixing its unyielding grasp upon the savage of America, the negro of Africa and the West Indies, the pagan of India, the cannibal of

Oceanica, its marvelous successes stand before us, all explained by the marvelous facts which have crowded our narrative. It has been everywhere the same in its simple, but potent agencies, everywhere the same in its results.

It started with no devised scheme. It proposed a single purpose, the salvation of individual men by their individual sanctification. Its individual converts were organized for the purpose of extending to others its one design. It seized on the most direct means for this design, and as these means multiplied they assumed spontaneously systematic forms, disciplinary, ministerial, missionary, financial, educational. Such is the genetic history of the whole Methodistic movement, such the solution of the whole problem of its success. Its historic lesson is obvious. Without its radical principle, personal piety, its great practical system would be throughout not only solecistical, but impracticable, and its distinctive theological system would be equally so. How can we conceive of a lifeless laity embodied in classes and meeting weekly to converse of Christian experience? Of love-feasts and prayer-meetings among dead formalists? Or of such a laity hearing and such a ministry preaching the distinctive doctrines of Methodism—distinguishable conversion, the witness of the Spirit, and Christian perfection? Herein then is Methodism unique, and it would seem impossible for it to fall, except by a revolution of its whole practical system, as well as by the decay of its essential theology. Its continued and progressive vigor during a century, in our day nearly a century and a quarter, renders it anomalous in modern ecclesiastical history, but the anomaly has its explanation in these facts.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CENTENARY JUBILEE OF METHODISM.

The Epoch of Methodism — Preparations for its Centenary Jubilee — Meeting at Manchester — Extraordinary Liberality — The Centenary Conference — The Centenary Celebration — Its Financial and Moral Results — Summary Results of Methodism — Calvinistic Methodism — Arminian Methodism — Statistical Results — Influence of Methodism on Anglo-Saxon Protestantism — Ecclesiastical and Theological Character of Methodism — Conclusion.

In 1839 Methodism entered upon its hundredth year. It was to be a memorable fact throughout the Methodist world. During several years it had been anticipated with no little interest. A new era had been introduced into the history of Protestantism, and it was deemed desirable that its centenary should be signalized by extraordinary celebrations, not with the boastful jubilations of a successful sect or party, but with thanksgivings to God, and practical testimonials of benevolent zeal for the world. Methodist communities of all distinctions resolved that such liberal things should be devised as had never had a parallel in their history, if, indeed, in the history of any religious body.

The suggestion of such a celebration originated with Butterworth, who had long been a distinguished actor in the history of the denomination, whose large soul had comprehended its extraordinary mission, and whose large means had been lavished upon its great schemes.[1] The hundredth anniversary of Wesley's ordination was first proposed as a suitable occasion for the solemnity, but the epoch of the organization of the "United Society" at the Old Foundry, London, was afterward considered preferable. Not only had

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[1] Jackson's Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism, chap. 7. London, 1839.

Wesleyan Methodism, in its organized form, sprung from that society, but in that year the general Methodistic movement may be said to have begun. It was on the first day of that year that Whitefield, Charles Wesley, Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, and others held the love-feast, the "Pentecostal season," as Whitefield called it, at Fetter Lane, when the baptism of the "Holy Spirit came mightily upon them," so that all were awed into silence, and some fell to the floor insensible; and the whole assembly, when it had "recovered a little from the amazement which the divine majesty had inspired," broke out with one voice in the ascription of the Te Deum, "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord!" It was in that year, four days later, that Whitefield met in a "conference" at Islington with "seven ministers, despised Methodists," and who, after fasting and praying till three o'clock in the afternoon, parted "with a full conviction that *God was about to do great things* among them." It was in that year that he "broke the ice," as he says, by beginning his outdoor preaching on a mound at Kingswood, and declared, when he saw the result, that "the fire is kindled in the country." It was then that he led Wesley across the Rubicon by inducing him to come to his help, and take, himself, the open field at Kingswood; that they both began their great moral battles in the metropolis, on Moorfields and Kennington Common; that Whitefield penetrated to Wales, and finding Howel Harris preaching in the highways, enlisted him in the Methodistic movement, and "set the whole Principality in a blaze;" that he passed over to America, and really began those great labors which were to awaken the Churches of the New World, for his previous visit had continued but a few months, which he spent in the Georgia colony, devising his Orphan-House scheme, for which he hastily returned to England. It was in that year that Wesley formed his first "band" at Bristol; that he laid in Bristol, "with the voice of praise and thanksgiving," the corner-stone of the first chapel, built by his people; that he and his brother issued the first volume of the "Hymns and Sacred Poems" which have since become the virtual liturgy of Methodism throughout the earth. The year 1739 was, therefore, the real historic epoch of Methodism, and, after much discussion in the periodicals of the denomination on both sides of the Atlantic, the Church determined to celebrate its hundredth anniversary in 1839.

At the Conference of 1837 a committee of preachers and laymen was appointed to report a plan for the celebration. It held three meetings during the ensuing year, which were numerously attended by influential preachers and laymen from different parts of the country. It reported to the Conference of 1838 that the primary object of the jubilee should be "the religious and devotional improvement of the centenary" by public services in the chapels of the denomination; and that, in connection with this object, there should be a "general pecuniary contribution" for some of the principal interests of the Church, as a thank-offering to Almighty God. The Conference approved its proposals, and ordered that a day of united prayer should be appointed in January, 1839, for "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit" on the Connection during the year; that Thomas Jackson should deliver a "centenary sermon" at their next session; that he should prepare a brief but comprehensive work on the subject of the centenary, giving historical notices of the progress of Methodism; that a day should be set apart, at their next session, for Conference devotional services in celebration of the year; and that, in all other places, a day in the month of October should be devoted to religious festal services "in every chapel." It was also voted that a committee of preachers and laymen should be called at Manchester, by the President of the Conference, to complete the plan of the celebration, and to appoint local sub-committees to promote the arrangement throughout the Church.

The committee met at Manchester, November 7, 1838. It was an imposing assembly, comprising about two hundred and fifty preachers and laymen. No meeting, it has been remarked, that was ever held in relation to Wesley an Methodism surpassed it in Christian feeling and pious beneficence.[2] Representatives were present from various parts of England and Ireland. Thomas Jackson, President of the Conference, presided. The platform was crowded with the most eminent ministers and laymen of the Connection. Eloquent speeches were made, characterized by thankful acknowledgments of the blessings of the Gospel, through the agency of Methodism, to the country, and to the individual speakers and their families. The convention continued through three days; its enthusiastic spirit rose with every hour, and it was difficult on the third day to induce the delegates to separate from a scene of so much devout interest. The financial plan of the jubilee was more completely defined. An extraordinary spirit of liberality pervaded the assembly, and unexpected sums were pledged to the financial objects of the celebration. The key-note to this munificence was struck by a communication from a widow lady, who, in acknowledgment of great benefits from Methodism to herself and family, announced her intention to contribute a thousand guineas. It was resolved that at least four hundred thousand dollars (£80,000) should be raised for the Centenary Fund. "Central Meetings" were appointed for various parts of the United Kingdom, and deputations were sent to them. The whole Connection soon caught the spirit of the Manchester meeting. Preparatory meetings were held in rapid succession on the circuits, and in the cities and towns, "so that the holy flame," says a chief actor in the arrangement, "spread in the course of the year from Penzance to Inverness, from Bandon to Belfast and the extreme north of Ireland."[3] It was soon found that the Manchester committee had entirely underrated the probable liberality of the Church. Successive reports came to its treasurers of extraordinary sums pledged. On a single day fifty thousand dollars (£10,000) were subscribed at City Road Chapel, London. Reports from England extended the liberal impulse through America. Ireland, though oppressed with poverty, gave seventy-two thousand five hundred dollars, (£14,500.) The foreign missions caught the spirit, and sent their contributions. In January, 1839, the Wesleyan Magazine announced the amount already contributed to be more than half a million dollars, (£102,000;) in March it announced seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars, (£150,000;) but even this sum was short of the truth, for by the twentieth of the preceding month the Manchester sub-committee had received lists of subscriptions from a hundred and eight circuits, amounting to eight hundred thousand dollars, (£160,000;) by August they reached a million dollars, (£200,000;) and four hundred thousand dollars (£80,000) had already been paid into the treasury. The sum continued to enlarge until the amount of one million and eighty thousand dollars (£216,000) was reached. Meanwhile the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States contributed six hundred thousand dollars, appropriating about one half to its superannuated preachers and the widows and orphans of preachers, two tenths to missions, and the remainder to its educational institutions.[4]

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[2] Jackson's Life of Newton, chap. 9. [3] Ibid.

The centenary Conference assembled at Liverpool, July 31, 1839, and was an occasion of unusual interest. Never had that body met under better auspices, never with a better retrospect or a better prospect. The attendance of both preachers and laymen was extraordinary. It reported an increase of more than sixteen thousand communicants for the year; it had one hundred and eighteen candidates for its ministry.[5] "We do not ask," wrote Newton from the session, "as if it were a doubtful matter, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' We have glorious news from the mission stations, especially from New Zealand and Africa. In spite of infidelity, popery, and worldly cupidity, the Gospel is doing its work, as the power of God unto salvation. I am more and more convinced that Divine Providence designs Wesleyan Methodism to be the great moral break-water, right and left, against the inundations of infidelity, Socinianism, superstition, and false religion. May we be faithful."

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[4] Bangs's History, etc. Ann. 1839.

[5] Jackson's Life of Newton, chap. 9.

It appointed Newton as its centenary representative to the American General Conference. On Monday, August 5th, the ordinary business of the Conference was suspended for its centenary services. As early as six o'clock in the morning a crowded prayer-meeting was held in the Conference chapel. It was followed by the "centenary sermon" of the ex-president, Thomas Jackson; in the evening the President, Theophilus Lessey, preached to a congregation which thronged the chapel within and without. The Conference revised the plan for the general celebration of the jubilee, appointing Friday, the 25th of October, to be observed throughout the Connection as the festal day, with prayer-meetings early in the morning, sermons in the forenoon and evening, as on the Sabbath, and festivities for the poor and the children of the Sunday-schools and day-schools in the afternoon. It apportioned the contributions,first,to the Theological Institution, for the erection of its new edifices, one in the north and one in the south; second, to the Wesleyan centenary buildings in London, and to the Missionary Society, particularly for new mission rooms and a mission ship; third, to the relief of distressed chapels; fourth, to the better support of worn-out preachers and their widows; fifth, for the building of a centenary chapel in Dublin; and sixth, to the Education Committee.

In the ensuing October the whole Methodist world united in the celebration. It was an occasion which had never been equaled by any Protestant religious body, in the extent and interest of its observance or in the munificence of its liberality. The aggregate sum contributed by various Methodistic bodies was more than seventeen hundred thousand dollars, and without interfering with their stated collections. Some of the most important financial foundations and public edifices of Wesleyan Methodism were erected and endowed forever by it. But these were secondary results; the moral influence of the occasion was incalculably more important. The almost incredible liberality of the denomination, during a year of almost unparalleled commercial depression, demonstrated its resources. The affection of the people for their great cause was shown to be profound and universal. A salutary religious feeling attended generally their jubilatic ceremonies; their surprising donations, pouring into the treasury from all parts of the world, were, in thousands of instances, accompanied by significant and touching sentiments: some were in honor of long deceased veterans, who had fought the battles of the early itineracy; others in memory of parents or children, brothers or sisters, who had been led to a religious life and into heaven by the agency of Methodism; others in commemoration of old class-mates, or class-leaders, or old pastors, who had long since gone to their rest, but could never die in the memories of the donors; some in grateful acknowledgment of special spiritual blessings, of redemption from vice, of deliverance or sanctification in great trials, of prosperity in business, of the moral rescue of kindred and friends. Never did Methodism receive more emphatic moral testimonials than in these acts of pecuniary liberality; never were there more sermons and addresses delivered or printed, respecting it, than during this year; never more discussions about it in public journals; never was its history more generally read, or its practical system more fully reviewed; never had it received a more thorough appreciation. Beyond, as well as within the denomination the extraordinary demonstration could not fail to produce a profound impression, for the whole Christian, the whole civilized world, saw more distinctly than ever that, after a hundred years of struggles and triumphs, the great movement was more demonstrative, and more prospective than ever it had been.

Nor was the Christian world disposed to deny that the commemorative demonstration was justified by the historical results of Methodism. What had the movement accomplished thus far? The foregoing narrative has answered somewhat this question. At appropriate periods its results have been summarily estimated. At the death of Whitefield its influence on the Calvinistic religious bodies was noticed. It was seen that it had, according to authorities not Methodistic, restored the Nonconformity of England; had founded the Calvinistic Methodism of Wales, which has provided a chapel for every three square miles of the Principality, has become its predominant dissenting community, and is to-day more powerful, morally as well as numerically, than ever before; that it has saved Nonconformity there, multiplying the thirty Dissenting Churches, which maintained a precarious existence in the early part of the last century, to more than twenty-three hundred, and so universally pervading the popular mind that Wales in our day exhibits a better attendance on public worship than any other Protestant country.[4] It was seen also that by Whitefield's agency the Calvinistic Churches of America, from Maine to Georgia, were quickened into that spiritual life and energy which has ever since characterized them; that he revived and extended the "Great Awakening" which had but locally and temporarily prevailed under Edwards; that he gave origin to the Presbyterian Church in Virginia; that he prepared the way for the extraordinary triumphs of the Methodist Episcopal Church; that, in fine, the Protestantism of the New World took its subsequent character, through him and his Arminian successors, from the "Holy Club" of Oxford.

At the death of Wesley the results of the Arminian section of the movement were appropriately considered, and it was seen that it had spread through most of the United Kingdom, had provided its people with a numerous and able ministry, with incipient institutions of education with a liturgy and an unequaled psalmody; had assumed an organic consolidation in both England and America, had spread to most other parts of the Anglo-Saxon world, and was already beginning to reach lands of other languages. The effects of the movement, on not only the moral but the intellectual and social condition of England, were traced, and it was shown that it had a chief agency, by its diffusion of cheap literature and the awakening of the popular mind, in that "immense change among the people," which a skeptical thinker admits to have begun among them in the last half of the eighteenth century, and "a leading characteristic of which, one that distinguishes it from all that preceded it, was a craving after knowledge on the part of those classes from whom knowledge had hitherto been shut out;"[5] a change by which the press, hitherto almost confined to the metropolis, was extended to the provincial towns; by which the newspapers of the land more than doubled in circulation from 1753 to 1792; by which authorship was enabled to break away from aristocratic patronage, and find a popular and remunerative market; by which the masses were brought to take an intelligent interest in public affairs, and to originate those popular assemblies for their discussion that have since had so potent an influence on their administration, and by which, according to a high authority of the national Church, the people for the first time began, toward the close of the century, to take an active and influential share in the great questions and enterprises of their religion;[6] an uprising, in fine, of the popular mind throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, which has given character to its modern civilization. It was seen also that most of the great religious and philanthropic institutions which now chiefly embody the moral power of Protestantism, the Bible

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[4] The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists have entered the foreign mission field, as we have seen, and have also provided for their emigrant people in the United States of America, where they have one hundred and thirteen churches, fifty-three ordained preachers, and thirty-six licentiates.

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[5] Buckle's History of Civilization, vol. i, chap. 7.

[6] Archbishop Whateley's Dangers to the Christian Faith, pp. 76, 77. For fuller details of these summary statements, see the concluding chapters of my first and second volumes.

Society,[7] the Tract Society, the modern Missionary Society, the Sunday School, as an agency of the Church, sprung directly or indirectly from the influence of the movement; that, in the language of a Churchman, "never was there such a scene before in the British Islands; there were no Bible, Tract, or Missionary Societies before to employ the Church's powers and indicate its path of duty, but Wesley started them all; the Church and the world were alike asleep; he sounded the trumpet and awoke the Church to work."[8]

From the death of Wesley to the centenary jubilee of the denomination, we have had to trace chiefly the practical progress of his system; he left it so complete that no revolutionary changes have ensued; but it has continued in rapid and powerful development; it has broken away from its original, necessary limitation to the territorial dominions of the Anglo-Saxon race, and, conceiving its mission to be one of universal evangelization, it has planted its standard upon most of the outlines of the world. The practical demonstration of this conception is the culminating fact of its history, and, taken in connection with the other marked stages of its progress, gives it an almost peculiar historic unity, no less providential than peculiar, and as prophetical as providential.

Wesley died at the head of a thoroughly organized host of 550 itinerant preachers and 140,000 members of his societies in the United Kingdom, in British North America, in the United States and in the West Indies.[9] At our present period, about half a century later, it had grown to more than 1,171,000, including about 5200 itinerant preachers, in the Wesleyan and Methodist Episcopal Churches; and, including the various bodies bearing the name of Methodists, to an army of more than 1,400,000, of whom 6080 were itinerant preachers. Its missionaries, accredited members of different Conferences, were about three hundred and fifty, with nearly an equal number of salaried, and about three thousand unpaid assistants. They occupied about three hundred stations, each station being the head of a circuit. They were laboring in Sweden, Germany, France, Cadiz, Gibraltar, and Malta, Western and Southern Africa, Ceylon, Continental India, New South Wales, Van Dieman's Land, New Zealand, Tonga, Habai Islands, Vavou Islands, Fiji Islands, the West Indies. They had under instruction in their mission-schools about fifty thousand pupils, and in their mission Churches were more than seventy thousand communicants. At least two hundred thousand persons heard the Gospel regularly in their mission chapels. The Methodist missionaries were now more numerous than the whole Wesleyan ministry, as enrolled on the Minutes of Wesley's last Conference, and their missionary communicants were about equal to the whole number of Methodists in Europe at that day. Wesley presided over Methodism during its first half century and two years more; during its second half century it reproduced, in its missions alone, the whole numerical force of its first half century.

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[7] As early as 1779, a quarter of a century anterior to the British and Foreign Bible Society, Wesleyan Methodists formed the Naval and Military Bible Society, "which afterward," says Jackson, "obtained high patronage," and is still an effective institution. Jackson's Centenary, etc., chap. 6. This was the first of existing Bible Societies, of which there are about fifty in various parts of the world.

[8] Rev. Dr. Dobbin, Dublin University. Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature. London, 1849.

[9] See vol. ii, p. 394, where the communicants were erroneously stated, in early issues, at 150,000, but correctly given at 140 000 in later editions.

Such were some of the facts, astonishing to the most sober contemplation, which its history presented at the time of its centenary jubilee; but with even such facts to stimulate the general joy, gratitude, and hope of its people, they could hardly have dared to anticipate the results which about twenty additional years were to present to us, in confirmation of the providential mission of their cause; its 18,000 itinerant preachers, its 2,800,000 communicants, its 10,000,000 hearers.[9] The sectarian partialities of our modern Protestantism render the task of the historian apparently invidious in the citation of such facts; but they are the legitimate, because the most significant historic data; as here presented they are assuredly within the limits of the actual truth, and may well justify the common gratitude and congratulation of the friends of our common faith.

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[9] Tefft's "Methodism Successful," p. 54. (New York, 1860.) Dr. Tefft includes the various Methodist bodies which began after 1839, and there-

Such are some of the results of the "Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism." The statistics of its success have probably no parallel in ecclesiastical history, ancient or modern. But these particularities are but indications. Its more general results, its moral influence on contemporary Christianity, if less appreciable, cannot be less important. Perronett, the venerable Churchman, marveling at its success, in his vicarage at Shoreham, years before Wesley's death, wrote: "I make no doubt that Methodism is designed by Providence to introduce the approaching millennium." Wesley, pondering its unexpected triumphs and solemn responsibility, twelve years before his death, conceived its true import. It was not, as a sect, actual or prospective, and especially not as a party in dogmatic theology, that he rejoiced over it, but as a "revival" of spiritual Christianity, which he believed would, by its happy exemption from ecclesiastical trammels and dogmatic exclusiveness, pervade existing Churches, and, even if it should at last take a distinct organic form, would still continue, perhaps permanently, to influence the Christian world. "The remark of Luther," he said, "'that a revival of religion seldom continues above thirty years,' has been verified many times in several countries. But it will not always hold. The present revival of religion in England has already continued fifty years. And, blessed be God! it is at least as likely to continue as it was twenty or thirty years ago. Indeed, it is far more likely; as it not only spreads wider, but sinks deeper than ever. We have, therefore, reason to hope that this revival of religion will

fore are not named in my work. He gives the latest statistics, and makes larger aggregates, namely, 50,000 preachers, (local and itinerant,) 3,000,000 communicants, 12,000,000 hearers.

continue, and continually increase, till the time when all Israel shall be saved, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come."[10] For more than eighty years, since he uttered this hope, it has continued as a "revival." Whatever other vicissitudes have attended its course, it has never lost this distinctive character; and its own statistical and ecclesiastical growth has not been so important a fact in its history, as the long-continued and still growing vitalization which it has given to Protestant Christendom—the impulse it has given to foreign evangelization, and to nearly all kinds of Christian enterprises, many of which, as we have seen, sprang from it, and most of which have derived their religious and philanthropic energy from that resuscitation of Christian life, which dates from its epoch. Taking, in due time, an ecclesiastical form, as necessary for the perpetuation of its work, it nevertheless did so without a sacrifice of its essential catholicity. Its ecclesiastical system has itself been a practical protest against ecclesiastical pretensions. In America it has been Episcopal in form, while denying any claim of scriptural authority for Episcopacy; in England it has been Presbyterian in form, while denying any claim of scriptural authority for Presbyterianism. In America it retains the orders of deacons and presbyters, but declines to acknowledge any scriptural obligation for them, though it acknowledges their scriptural example. In England it retains only the order of presbyters, without denying the scriptural example of the order of deacons. In both it maintains ordination by the imposition of hands, and in both it denies any other importance to this form than that of ceremonial expediency. In America it has Articles of Religion and a Ritual, from which Wesley excluded all creeds except that called the Apostles'; and its articles are, as we have seen, more indicative than obligative as a standard of faith. In England it has no Articles, but recognizes certain Sermons and Biblical Notes of Wesley as its standard of opinion—a standard which necessarily requires a generous and catholic interpretation. With a theology well defined in its literature, it has practically protested against theological dogmatism and the undue authority of human symbols of belief. It has attached supreme importance to spiritual life, as the distinguishing characteristic of a true Church, and to Christian labors as the chief mission of such a Church. With its more systematic ecclesiastical development its general character has been elevated, its ministry has become less irregular, its preachers better educated, its literature enlarged by the writings of such men as Benson, Clarke, Watson, Townley, Drew, Isaac, Edmondson, Sutcliffe, and Jackson; its practical plans made more effective by the wisdom of Bunting and his associates. It has multiplied seminaries, colleges, theological schools, and printing presses; has improved its Church edifices, and assumed in all respects an attitude of secure strength, by which it has been able to prosecute more effectually its primary work of spreading spiritual religion over the world. It has practically restored the primitive "priesthood of the people," not only by the example of its lay or local ministry, more than twice as numerous as its regular ministry, but by its exhorters, class-leaders, prayer-leaders, and the religious activity to which it has trained its laity generally.

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[10] Works, vol. vii, p. 180. New York, 1839.

The causes of its success have been so marvelously effective as to be mistaken for a problem, and have commanded much curious and elaborate inquiry; but they are apparent in every stage of its progress, and so distinctly have they presented themselves to our consideration, at appropriate periods of this narrative, as to render irrelevant here any farther discussion; and so legible are they on its whole history, so clearly do they show its appropriate policy for the future, that if ever the mighty movement shall fail of its still greater practicable results, by the errors of its leaders, it must be in spite of a hundred years of the most demonstrative lessons which have been recorded in the history of Christianity since the age of its apostolic founders.

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